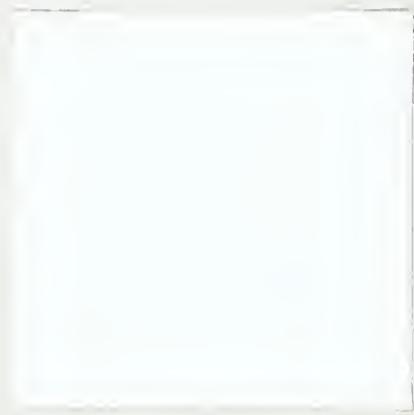
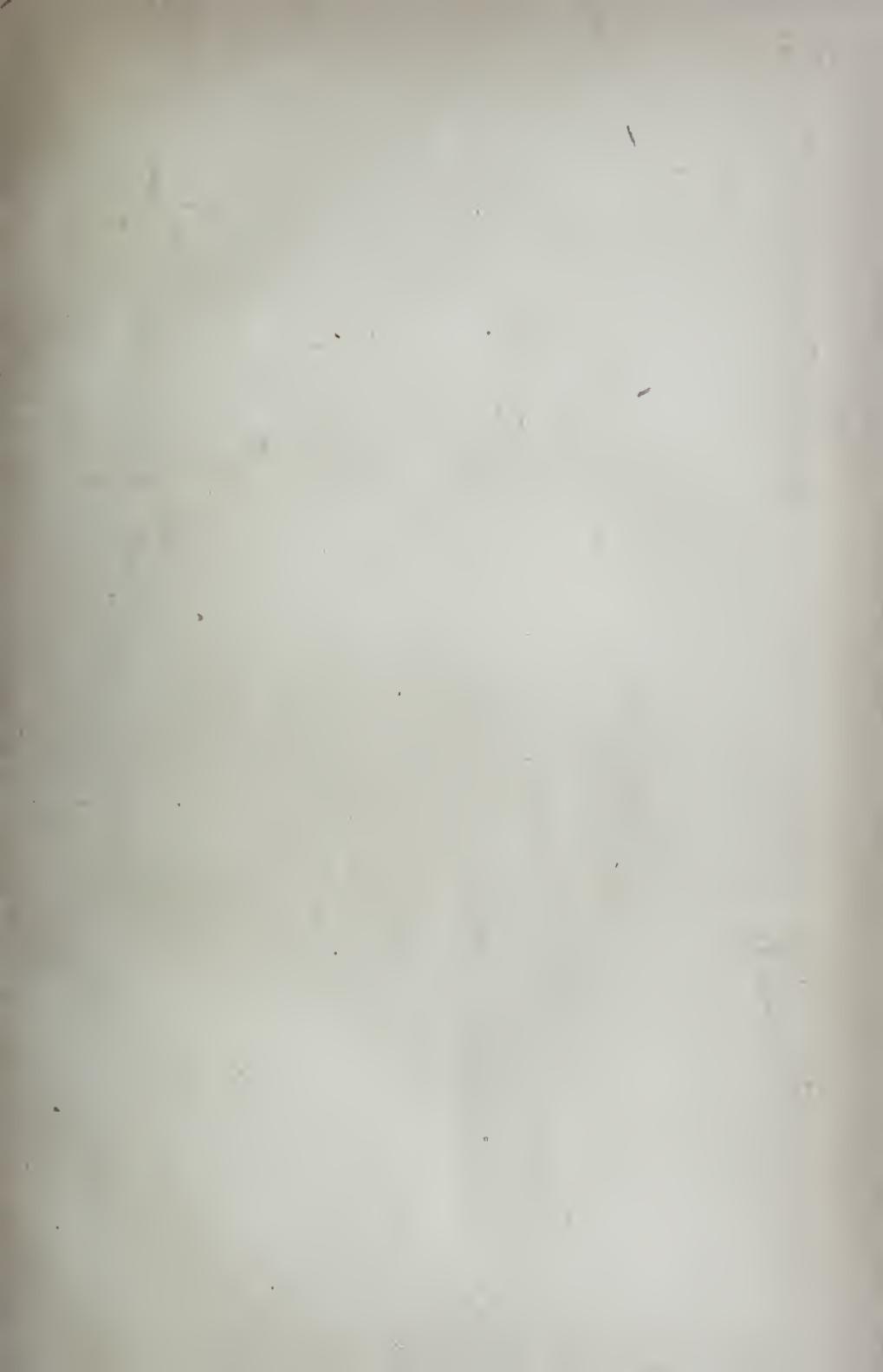


BOSTON  
METROPOLITAN PARK REPORT

---

MASSACHUSETTS — 1893







WITH COMPLIMENTS OF . . . .

Metropolitan Park Commission.



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2017 with funding from  
Getty Research Institute

<https://archive.org/details/reportofboardofm1893mass>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 150.**

---

**REPORT OF THE BOARD**

**OF**

**Metropolitan Park Commissioners.**

---

**JANUARY, 1893.**

---

---

**A N   A C T**

**To establish a Board of Metropolitan Park Commissioners  
and to define its Powers and Duties.**

*Be it enacted, etc., as follows:*

SECTION 1. The governor, by and with the advice and consent of the council, shall appoint three persons, to be known as the Metropolitan Park Commissioners, who shall hold their office for one year from the first day of May in the year eighteen hundred and ninety-two. Said commissioners shall consider the advisability of laying out ample open spaces for the use of the public, in the towns and cities in the vicinity of Boston, and shall have authority to make maps and plans of such spaces and to collect such other information in relation thereto as it may deem expedient, and shall report to the next general court, on or before the first Wednesday of February, a comprehensive plan for laying out, acquiring and maintaining such open spaces.

SECT. 2. Said commissioners may employ such assistants as they may deem necessary, and may expend such sums therefor and in the discharge of their duties, including the actual travelling expenses of said members, as the governor and council may determine. Said commissioners shall receive no compensation.

SECT. 3. This act shall take effect upon its passage.





FRONTISPICE. THE BLUE HILL RANGE, MILTON. After a drawing by Ross Turner.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE
<b>AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A BOARD OF METROPOLITAN PARK COMMISSIONERS,</b> . . . . .	ii
<b>REPORT OF THE COMMISSION,</b> . . . . .	ix
<b>REPORT OF THE SECRETARY,</b> . . . . .	1

### PART FIRST.

<b>I. Need of an Ample Provision of Open Spaces, and Difficulties in the Way of obtaining them,</b> . . . . .	1
1. Some contradictory aspects of the metropolitan region, .	1
2. Peculiar political geography of the neighborhood of Boston, . . . . .	3
3. Disintegration and reintegration of communities in this neighborhood, . . . . .	5
4. Difficulty of the municipal problem here involved, . . . . .	7
5. Various needs that require consideration, . . . . .	9
6. Local jealousies a bar to satisfactory results, . . . . .	10
7. Drafts upon local resources through rapid growth an impediment to proper dealing with this question, .	12
<b>II. The Logical Method of solving this Problem,</b> . . . . .	13
1. The best instrumentality for securing the desired ends, .	13
2. Cost of acquiring the proposed lands.—Aid from private beneficence, . . . . .	17
3. Sanitary improvements promoted by recreative treatment.—Protecting water supplies, . . . . .	18
4. Constituent communities of the metropolitan district, .	20
<b>III. Special Advantages that will follow the Adoption of this Plan,</b> .	22
1. Direct value of an attractive environment to Boston, .	23
2. Advantages accruing to local communities from pleasure grounds beyond their limits, . . . . .	24

### PART SECOND.

<b>I. An Examination of the Separate Features under Consideration,</b> .	25
<b>II. Boston Bay,—Its Islands and Shores,</b> . . . . .	25
1. Restoring the tree-covering on the islands, . . . . .	27
2. The south shore, . . . . .	29

	PAGE
<b>II. <i>Boston Bay, — Its Islands and Shores</i> — Concluded.</b>	
3. Nantasket Beach and the hills and shores of Hull, . . . . .	30
4. The Hingham, Weymouth and Braintree shores, . . . . .	30
5. The north shore. — Winthrop: a typical illustration of detrimental real estate development, . . . . .	31
6. A warning example from England, . . . . .	34
7. How best to promote a healthy local growth, . . . . .	34
8. Notable local features in Winthrop, . . . . .	35
9. Revere: invaluable character of the magnificent beach, . . . . .	36
10. The Lynn, Nahant and Swampscott shores, . . . . .	38
<b>III. <i>Inland Features of the North and West Metropolitan Region.</i> —</b>	
<i>Lynn Woods,</i> . . . . .	39
1. The Saugus River valley. — “Appleton’s Pulpit,” . . . . .	39
2. Snake Creek valley between Chelsea and Revere, . . . . .	40
3. The valley of the Mystic River, . . . . .	40
4. The natural park for Everett and Charlestown, . . . . .	41
5. The Upper Mystic. — Mystic Lakes, Woburn and Winchester, . . . . .	42
6. The Middlesex Fells, . . . . .	43
7. The Waverley Oaks, . . . . .	45
8. Prospect Hill, . . . . .	45
<b>IV. <i>The Charles River,</i> . . . . .</b>	46
1. Pollution of the stream, . . . . .	47
2. The menace of malaria, . . . . .	47
3. Recreative value of the river, . . . . .	49
4. Utilitarian ends best served by recreative means, . . . . .	51
5. Present conditions of the river, . . . . .	52
6. Existing public holdings bordering the Charles, . . . . .	53
7. The Hemlock Gorge at Echo Bridge, . . . . .	54
<b>V. <i>Features of the South Metropolitan Region. — The Neponset River,</i> . . . . .</b>	55
1. The Muddy Pond Woods in West Roxbury and Hyde Park, . . . . .	56
2. In West Roxbury and Brookline, . . . . .	57
3. The Blue Hill range, . . . . .	58
<b>VI. <i>Lakes and Ponds of the Metropolitan District,</i> . . . . .</b>	59
1. The example set by Wakefield at Lake Quannapowitt, . . . . .	59
2. Jamaica Pond and other lakes, . . . . .	60
3. Horn Pond in Woburn, . . . . .	61

## PART THIRD.

<b>I. <i>Special Pleasure-ways, or Roads for Light Traffic,</i> . . . . .</b>	62
1. Occupation of highways by street railways, . . . . .	63
2. The Illinois boulevard law, . . . . .	63
3. A deficiency of good and pleasant roads connecting with Boston from the northward, . . . . .	65
4. A general parkway act recommended, . . . . .	66

## CONTENTS.

v

	PAGE
<b>II. Local Pleasure Grounds, Playgrounds and Breathing Spots,</b> . . . . .	67
1. Model examples of local pleasure grounds in Boston, . . . . .	68
2. Present playground provisions in various communities of the metropolitan district, . . . . .	70
3. Certain drawbacks to the suburban movement as a remedy for the evils of a congested population, . . . . .	70
4. Ideal urban conditions: a combination of town and country, . . . . .	72
5. The tendencies toward this ideal as illustrated in Bos- ton to-day, . . . . .	73
6. Tenement blocks with central garden and playground spaces, . . . . .	73
7. Local pleasure grounds a subject of world-wide interest, . . . . .	77
8. Need of foresight in establishing local pleasure grounds, . . . . .	79
9. Legislation recommended, . . . . .	80
 <b>REPORT OF THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT,</b> . . . . .	 82
Introduction, . . . . .	82

### PART FIRST.

A summary of the physical and historical geography of the metropolitan district, . . . . .	83
The rock foundation, . . . . .	83
The glacial rubbish, . . . . .	84
The fresh waters, . . . . .	85
The sea, . . . . .	85
The effects of human occupancy, . . . . .	86

### PART SECOND.

A study of the way in which the peculiar geography of the metropolitan district ought to govern the selection of the sites of public open spaces, . . . . .	89
---	----

### PART THIRD.

A review of the opportunities which still present themselves for creating new open spaces in accordance with the governing considerations just laid down, . . . . .	92
The rock-hills, . . . . .	92
The ponds and streams, . . . . .	98
The bay and the sea, . . . . .	107

	PAGE
APPENDICES, . . . . .	113
A. An act to establish a Metropolitan Parks Commission, . . . . .	115
B. An act in addition to an act for the laying-out of public parks by towns and cities, . . . . .	124
C. An act to facilitate the procuring of playgrounds by cities and towns, . . . . .	127
D. An act to encourage the building of tenement-houses around garden or playground spaces, . . . . .	130
E. Restoration of tree-growth on the islands and shores of Boston Bay.—Report of Frederick Law Olmsted on “The improvement of Boston’s advantages as a summer resort,” . . . . .	131
F. A “Massachusetts Forest,” . . . . .	143

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIVE PLATES.

---

1. *Pine Hill, Medford.*
2. *North Reservoir, Winchester.*
3. *Spot Pond, Stoneham.*
4. *East shore of Lake Quannapowitt, Wakefield.* After a photograph by E. N. Gleason.
5. *One of the Malden cliffs.*
6. *A crag near the Bear's den, Malden.* After a photograph by Francis W. Morandi.
7. *Cascade near Fells Station, Melrose.* After a photograph by George E. Davenport.
8. *Island End Creek and Mystic River, Everett.*
9. *Snake Creek, Chelsea and Revere.*
10. *Belle Isle Creek and Breed's Island.*
11. *Great Head, Winthrop.* After a photograph by N. L. Stebbins.
12. *Revere Beach.* After a photograph by N. L. Stebbins.
13. *The sea front at Brighton, England.*
14. *Beaver Brook Oaks, Waverley.* After a photograph by Henry Brooks.
15. *Charles River at Riverside Station.* Drawn by W. P. Bodwell, after a photograph by Augustus Pond.
16. *Charles River, Newton and Weston.* After a photograph by Charles Wells Hubbard.
17. *Boating on the Thames, near London, England.*
18. *A run-way on the Thames.* Drawn by Louis J. Bridgman, after a photograph by F. L. Olmsted, Jr.
19. *Hemlock Gorge, Newton Upper Falls.* After a photograph by Francis W. Morandi.
20. *The Blue Hills over Muddy Pond Woods.*
21. *Muddy Pond, West Roxbury.*
22. *The Fowl Meadows, Neponset River.* After a photograph by Benjamin Kimball.
23. *Paul's Bridge, Neponset River.* After a photograph by George H. Chickering.
24. *Neponset River near Mattapan.* After a photograph by Roland Thaxter.
25. *Neponset River under Milton Hill.*
26. *Neponset marshes and the distant Blue Hills.*
27. *Black's Creek, Quincy.*
28. *Thompson's Island, from Little Squantum.*
29. *Peddock's Island, from Point Pemberton.*
30. *Nantasket shore, Hull and Cohasset.* By permission of Charles Pollock, Hamilton Place, Boston.
31. *Nantasket Beach, Hull.* By permission of Charles Pollock, Hamilton Place, Boston.

LIST OF MAPS, PLANS, DIAGRAMS AND OF ILLUSTRATIONS PRINTED WITH THE TEXT.

---

	PAGE
Diagram of municipal boundaries in the neighborhood of Boston,	15
Plan of the southerly portion of the Charlesbank, near the West Boston bridge, Boston, . . . . .	69
Plan of Charlestown playground, . . . . .	70
Artisans' dwellings erected by the municipality, Liverpool, Eng., .	74
Plan of tenements erected by the Co-operative Building Company, Boston, . . . . .	76
Comparative diagrams of public open spaces around London, Paris and Boston, . . . . .	82
Map of the Middlesex Fells, . . . . .	94
Map of the Blue Hills, . . . . .	97
Cheese-cake Brook, Newton, . . . . .	101
Charles River basin, . . . . .	103
Part of parkway, Muddy River, Boston and Brookline, . . . . .	104
Map of the metropolitan district, . . . . .	112
Diagram of Boston Bay, . . . . .	135
Chart of Boston Bay, . . . . .	142

## Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

---

*To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth in General Court assembled.*

The Board of Metropolitan Park Commissioners, appointed under the provisions of chapter 342 of the Acts of 1892, present the following report:—

The members of the commission were appointed in July, and the Board organized early in August. The act establishing the Board (Acts of 1892, chapter 342) required the commissioners to “consider the advisability of laying out ample open spaces for the use of the public, in the towns and cities in the vicinity of Boston,” and, the better to enable them to do this, to “employ such assistants as they may deem necessary.” Upon consideration, it was decided that a proper performance of the work in hand would call for the services of a secretary interested in the subject and familiar with the ground to be covered, whose duty it would be also to collect documentary information; a professional landscape architect, to devise a practical scheme of development and prepare the maps, plans and report to explain it; and, finally, a legal adviser, to look up the precedents for legislation and draft the acts to carry the proposed scheme into effect. Sylvester Baxter was thereupon appointed secretary; the services of Charles Eliot, as landscape architect, were engaged; and those of Conrad Reno as legal adviser.

During September, October and the early portion of November, the commissioners, in company with Messrs. Baxter and Eliot, visited personally every point of interest in connection with the work in hand within ten miles of Boston, including the islands in the harbor and the Revere and Nantasket beaches; the Lynn Woods, the Middlesex Fells and the Blue Hills Forest; the basins of the Charles, the Mystic

and the Neponset rivers; the Waverley Oaks, Prospect and Bellevue Hills; the Muddy Pond Woods, and Mystic, Spot, Spy, Horn and Fresh ponds; besides other localities unnecessary to specify here, but all of which will be found referred to in detail in the accompanying report of the secretary and the scheme of Mr. Eliot.

In the course of these visits the commissioners met the various boards of park commissioners of the cities and towns interested, where such boards existed, and had a free and full exchange of views with the gentlemen composing those boards. They also familiarized themselves, in so far as they could, with the plans of future development those boards had under consideration. Incidentally, careful consideration was given to problems of water supply and drainage.

The elaborate report prepared by the secretary, and Mr. Eliot's scheme of park development, herewith submitted, make it unnecessary for the commissioners to enter into details. All needful information on every point involved can be obtained from those documents and the accompanying maps and plans. What the commissioners have to say, therefore, will be brief, and limited practically to recommendations of immediate legislative action. The scheme proposed cannot be carried out in its entirety at once; nor, in the opinion of the commissioners, would it be either wise or economical to hurry it. The first step only can now be taken; and, although that step may not in itself seem considerable, it commits the Commonwealth to a policy of far-reaching consequence, and should accordingly be well considered.

The commissioners are in the first place satisfied that it is necessary to organize a metropolitan district. The time for this is distinctly come, and for several years legislation has been shaping itself to that end. The great increase of rapid transit facilities since the railroad system was originated, and their more recent development through electricity, has already made every town within ten miles of Boston a close suburb of that city. Those towns may in fact be said to be the bed-chambers of the city counting-room. To Boston a great and always increasing proportion of those living in the surrounding municipalities now go

daily to pursue their business or make their purchases; and from Boston they daily return to their homes. In everything but in name they are inhabitants of both places; and, in everything but in local government and name, the two places are one. Each new appliance of rapid transit gives an additional impetus to this phase of development; and new appliances ever crowd upon each other. There is in the development, also, much that is good and little that is bad; it is natural, healthy, and advantageous in a large way to all concerned. It should accordingly be recognized and made the basis of legislation; for without such recognition and consequent legislation the necessary provision for growth cannot be made. Of this the whole region referred to now shows abundant and lamentable evidence. Recognition has already been much too long delayed.

The limits of what the commissioners designate as the metropolitan district define themselves with sufficient distinctness. Within it are comprised generally all the cities and towns served by the system of local, suburban or accommodation trains on the railroads terminating in Boston. These are the twelve cities of Boston, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Lynn, Malden, Medford, Newton, Quincy, Somerville, Waltham and Woburn, and the twenty-four towns of Arlington, Belmont, Braintree, Brookline, Canton, Dedham, Hingham, Hull, Hyde Park, Melrose, Milton, Nahant, Needham, Revere, Saugus, Stoneham, Swampscott, Wakefield, Watertown, Wellesley, Weston, Weymouth, Winchendon and Winthrop.

The cities and towns above named contain altogether eight hundred and eighty-eight thousand inhabitants, or close upon forty per cent. of the entire population of the Commonwealth. The proposed district is also, as respects both population and wealth, the most rapidly increasing part of Massachusetts. A city population is fast diffusing itself over it. It is not unsafe to predict that, containing nearly nine hundred thousand inhabitants now, it will contain a million and a half within a measurable time. To all practical intents and purposes also that population will consist of the inhabitants of one large municipality.

This state of affairs cannot but call for some common

regulation of many things entering of necessity into modern civilized life. Such a system of common regulation should not be precipitated, or entered upon in pursuance of any theory or desire of symmetry. The advantages of local government are well understood in Massachusetts, and do not need to be dwelt upon here: but, where a political need exists, intelligent provision should be made for it; for, if it be not made, growth will go on all the same, though in some forced and unnatural way. In a great metropolitan district, consisting of one large city and its suburbs, near and remote,—a district like that around London, Paris, New York, Chicago, and in similar, though less, degree, Boston,—there are common needs and interests in matters of police, drainage, water supply, means of communication, and to these should be added open-space reservations. A proper park system for a community of this character cannot be developed within local lines, nor is it just to localities that it should be so developed. All enjoy the results; all consequently should participate according to their means and needs in bringing those results about.

This proposition the commissioners do not deem it necessary to elaborate further than by a single illustration. The summer—the period of heat and out-of-door life and enjoyment—is the season of the year when all feel the need of open-air reservations; the luxury of the rich, these then become the right, as well as the necessity, of the poor. The natural trend of movement at that season in eastern Massachusetts speaks unmistakably for itself, and shows what the popular demand is; rich and poor instinctively find their way towards the ocean; the excursion steamers are thronged, the beaches are black with visitors. Nor is this movement confined to those who dwell in the crowded districts of Boston. It takes in all the suburbs of Boston. The islands in the bay should, therefore, in answer to this natural demand, be at no remote time converted into marine parks, and the beaches should be set aside and sacredly preserved as public reservations. Yet this can never be done except through combined action. To expect the local municipalities—sometimes towns neither rich nor populous—to carry the burden of such a public work as the proper improvement of

Revere or Nantasket beach, is neither right nor practical. It must be borne by the district for whose benefit and enjoyment it will exist, or the burden most assuredly will not be assumed at all.

The first and obvious step, therefore, towards a proper system of open-space reservations, is the organization of a metropolitan district on the lines indicated; and the commissioners have accordingly caused to be prepared, and they herewith submit, a bill to that end. (See Appendix A.)

Under ordinary circumstances, this Board would not deem it necessary to go further at present. The enactment of some such bill as that proposed is the initial step; and, ordinarily, one step at a time is enough. The creation of a metropolitan district involves, of course, an executive power to make the organization of the proposed district effective; and to that executive power would naturally be referred the "comprehensive plan for laying out, acquiring and maintaining open spaces," provided for in the act creating this Board, and contained in the reports of the secretary and Mr. Eliot. To carry that plan into effect, either wholly or in part, would be the next step; and this step will necessitate further and yet more careful consideration, for it will involve not only large financial outlay, but the solution of intricate engineering problems, to effect which careful legislation will need to be matured. The work of years is involved.

Take, for instance, the two beaches, Nantasket and Revere, already referred to, and the Charles River basin. In both cases matters have been so long neglected and things allowed traditionally to take their own course wholly without direction, that to disentangle the existing complication will be a difficult task. And yet, in the case of the Charles River basin at least, it is a task that has got to be entered upon; for the Charles River basin has become a problem of health, which, through an increasing death rate, will soon or late force its own solution upon even the most unwilling community. Every year of delay will only make that solution more difficult and more costly.

The commissioners would therefore rest satisfied with submitting a general plan, and providing the machinery for

deliberately entering on the work of carrying that plan out in such way as may hereafter be found most expedient and practical, did not recent observation satisfy them that any further delay may, in some respects, involve more irreparable injury and greatly increased future expense. So far as the Nantasket and Revere beaches and the Charles and Neponset basins are concerned, the mischief has to a large extent been done; they can,—indeed, they must, wait; for the vested rights involved present problems and difficulties which cannot be solved or overcome at once. So with the islands in Boston harbor. With two considerable exceptions only,—Thompson's and Peddock's,—they are already owned either by the national government or by Boston; they accordingly are safe. Leaving their development to the future involves no risk. But this is not the case with two of the remaining large open spaces within the proposed metropolitan district,—the so-called Middlesex Fells, and the Blue Hills Forest. The commissioners do not propose here to dilate on the convenient location and the natural beauties of those two regions. They are sufficiently indicated and referred to on the plan and in the documents which accompany this report. It is merely necessary here to say that, in the opinion of the commissioners, immediate action is desirable towards securing those tracts of territory for all-time public use, unless great risk is to be incurred that, in regard to them also, the experience of the ocean beaches and river basins will repeat itself. The real estate speculator is already making inroads upon them; and town sites are incompatible with wild natural reservations and forest life. It needs but little time in these matters to work irreparable injury; and the observation of the commissioners satisfies them that the danger of such injury, so far as both the fells and the forest are concerned, is immediately imminent.

Together these two open spaces include some five thousand acres, three thousand of which lie north of the city of Boston and two thousand south of it; both within an easy attainable distance. Those dwelling in any part of the proposed metropolitan district can reach and enjoy one or the other. The whole, in its natural wild state, could now be

secured and set aside as a public reservation, park and pleasure ground, secure to all future generations at a comparatively slight cost. Their artistic development might safely be left to the future; for then, like the islands of Boston harbor, they will be secure, and always there.

In the bill submitted, general financial provision is made to enable the proposed commission to enter on its work with energy and upon a suitable, though reasonable, scale; and this provision includes an amount which a careful estimate satisfies the present board should be adequate for the immediate acquisition of the Middlesex Fells and the Blue Hills Forest, if such acquisition is deemed desirable. In framing this feature of the act, it is only necessary further to say that the precedent and analogy of the metropolitan sewerage act of 1889 (chapter 439) has been closely followed.

Provision is also made for the prompt acquisition of any smaller spots within the proposed district of recognized natural beauty and interest, such as the Waverley Oaks and Hemlock Gorge at Echo Bridge, should the acquisition of any such be expedient to preserve them, or should public-spirited benefactors wish to purchase and dedicate them to the people.

Finally, it will be observed that during the first five years of the existence of the proposed metropolitan parks district the proportion of the total expense which may be incurred is in the case of Boston arbitrarily fixed at one-half of the whole, leaving the other half to be apportioned among the cities and towns of the district other than Boston. Fifty per cent. of the whole would be unquestionably less than the proportion allotted to Boston on a division based upon either valuation or population; but, on the other hand, the commissioners in fixing this arbitrary allotment had in mind the fact that Boston has already incurred, or is now incurring, an expense of some \$11,000,000 in developing a system of parks at its own cost, which are free to the whole metropolitan district. The maintenance of these parks, including the Castle Island water park, involves a yearly expense of about \$100,000. Thus Boston is already on its own account involved, because of open-air reserva-

tions free to all, in a total and annual outlay at least ten times as large as is at present proposed for the entire metropolitan district of which that city is a part; and of which it is, in addition to its own outlay, to bear one-half of the whole expense.

So far as the present is concerned, the commissioners decline to make further recommendations. The schemes of development suggested in the accompanying papers of the secretary and Mr. Eliot are attractive, and have much to recommend them. Doubtless, also, they are well considered; but too much should not be attempted at once, and the projects outlined in these documents can best engage hereafter the attention of the permanent commissioners provided for in the accompanying form of bill, should that measure become a law.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS,  
PHILIP A. CHASE,  
WILLIAM B. DE LAS CASAS,

*Metropolitan Park Commissioners.*





1. PINE HILL, MEDFORD.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT.

---

### PART FIRST.

---

#### I.

##### NEED OF AN AMPLE PROVISION OF OPEN SPACES, AND DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF OBTAINING THEM.

*To the Board of Metropolitan Park Commissioners :—*

GENTLEMEN :—The provision of ample open spaces for public recreation and the promotion of public health is now universally regarded as an essential feature in the proper equipment of urban communities. In all parts of the civilized world the leading cities are recognizing this necessity. The younger cities are perceiving the wisdom of providing amply for the future in this respect by securing lands in suitable locations and in sufficient amount, to be developed with the growth of their population. The older cities, like London, Paris and Berlin, though long possessed of extensive reservations of this description, are to-day finding their amount of open spaces inadequate, and are taking measures for securing extensive areas in addition that will meet the needs of the future.

It was in view of the needs of the country around Boston that the General Court of 1892 authorized the appointment of a commission to investigate the subject, directing that a plan be reported for providing ample open spaces for the use of the public in the towns and cities in the vicinity of Boston.

#### 1. *Some Contradictory Aspects of the Metropolitan Region.*

A stranger looking over the country lying within ten or twelve miles of the Boston city hall, and ignorant of the

existenee of the politieal boundaries separating, by almost wholly "imaginary lines," the various cities and towns that make up one of the densest masses of population to be found in the new world upon an area of like extent, would be puzzled to account for certain things that could not fail to attract his attention. He would see what appeared to be one great city massed around the shores of the harbor and along the banks of the rivers emptying therein, its thousands of buildings spreading irregularly out into the valleys and over the hill slopes of the surrounding country. He would see this great city occupying a region of remarkable and diversified landscape interest; a bay with beautiful shores and numerous islands large and small, a country varied with hills and fields, woodland, meadows, lakes and streams. He would find the population comprised within a considerable segment of the southerly half of this region provided with extensive facilities for public open-air reereation; an admirably devised system of parks, parkways and boulevards, public gardens and playgrounds, forming eon-tinuous chains of pleasure ground, or sprinkled liberally over the territory. Throughout the rest of the great urban area, with few exceptions, he would see almost nothing of the kind. He would behold miles and miles of thickly settled territory, with praticeally not a square yard of public gronnd. He would naturally wish to know the reason for this remarkable contrast; why a certain portion of the population should be so favored, while the other portions were entirely without the needed facilities? Wherfore luxury and abundance on one side, and beyond the opposite? He would be informed that the reason was that the favored portion of the population formed one municipality by itself, and by the conceentration of its wealth and energy thus made possible had been enabled to provide for its own needs; while the rest of the popnlation,— comprising nearly one-half of the entire number of inhabitants occupying the region, and from its rate of growth soon destined to comprise much the larger part of the whole,— being split np into various small communities, divided upon politcal and not natural lines, had been unable to provide for its needs in an intelligent manner, and thus was in danger of becoming a vast desert of houses, faactories

and stores, spreading over and overwhelming the natural features of the landscape, as lines of sand dunes, advancing from the seashore, overwhelm and obliterate the woods and fields. The creation of such a human desert, relieved by hardly an oasis, is threatened upon the greater part of this naturally beautiful region.

## *2. Peculiar Political Geography of the Neighborhood of Boston.*

The exceptional nature of this densely populated and rapidly growing section of the Commonwealth now generally known as the “metropolitan district of Boston” is therefore seen to be such as to demand a peculiar method of treatment, under legislation framed especially for the purpose. The excellent legislative provisions that have from time to time been made to meet the necessities of the various communities of the Commonwealth in the way of parks and other open spaces for recreative purposes cannot with good results be applied to the requirements of this region. With few exceptions, the other cities and towns of the State are each clearly defined social, as well as political, entities. Each can therefore be safely left to look out for itself in all the varied concerns that make up the wants of a modern community. The State has but to grant the necessary authority, has but to provide the machinery adapted to the exercise of the respective functions, and each community can then be trusted to meet its own needs as they arise.

Quite different is it with the Boston metropolitan district. While divided by political lines into a large number of cities and towns, socially this district is, to all intents and purposes, essentially one community. It must therefore be considered such when questions present themselves arising from the needs developed by the growth of such a community. For, if the various cities and towns forming this great urban composite are in the future, as they have been in the past, to be treated separately, these needs can be met only in the most unsatisfactory manner, and in a way that cannot fail to impede the healthy growth and hamper the proper development which should characterize a community of this class.

It is evident that the political conformation and organization of a community should be governed by its physical character. When, at or near its foundation, an important city is planned with foresight, when the direction which its future growth is to take becomes clearly evident, we may see this exemplified. Cases in point are large cities in the West, like Chicago and Minneapolis, where with wise forethought all the territory that appears needful for the natural expansion of those cities has been brought under one jurisdiction; not with the purpose, as has been asserted, of figuring up a great area and population, but in order that the demands of the future may be met in the best possible manner as they may arise, and without waste of energy and money. Our national capital is one of the best instances of a great city planned with a view to its growth into what it has now become, and it is consequently easier to provide it with the equipment necessary for a modern municipality than almost any other centre of population.

The development of the great metropolitan population in and about the present city of Boston has proceeded in a quite different manner. A glance at the map is sufficient to show us how it is cut up by local community boundary lines, not only without the least regard to the physical character of the region, but almost, it would seem, in wilful disregard of such character.

If we consider for a moment the history of the growth of this great population, we may readily understand why it is that things have taken the shape that they now wear. Boston, from earliest days, was the centre of the colony. About it all political, commercial and social interests were gathered. To-day, for instance, we see the five counties comprising the original county divisions of the two colonies of Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth all clustered about Boston bay, and converging thereupon in a way that may be compared to slices of an irregularly divided pie. Before the annexation of rural municipalities to Boston had considerably changed the county lines these slices were more regular in shape. Then Norfolk, Middlesex and Essex, in particular, converged around the few hundred acres comprised in the county of Suffolk, from the direction of three of the four





## 2. NORTH RESERVOIR, WINCHESTER.

quarters of the compass; the bay, with Plymouth County to the south of it, occupying the fourth quarter.

The local community boundaries, as at present constituted, are no less irregular than the county lines. The crazy-quilt aspect borne by a colored map of the metropolitan district, showing, in contrasting hues, the various cities and towns composing it, is something that must strike a resident of more westerly portions of our country, where regularly divided township areas are the rule, as one of the strangest absurdities that could be devised.

### *3. Disintegration and Reintegration of Communities in this Neighborhood.*

Down to the present time the process by which this map has assumed its most curious and unsymmetrical aspect, with one exception, that of the city of Boston itself, has been one of gradual community-disintegration. In the early days the colonization of this portion of the country proceeded from Boston outwards in various directions. Small clusters of population formed themselves here and there, mainly with reference to convenient approaches from the centre either by natural roadways through the valleys, or near favorable landing places on the streams and along the shores of the bay. These communities were, for the most part, distinctively rustic villages, and the location of the lands round about possessed by their inhabitants determined the character of township lines. Even the populations nearest Boston, like Cambridge, Chelsea and Roxbury, maintained their rural character down to comparatively recent days, and so slight were the transit requirements in the way of intercommunication between the city and its most immediate suburbs, that, within the memory of people yet in middle life, an hourly omnibus was sufficient to meet all the local demands; needs for which all the hundreds of steam railway trains, and the electric cars that congest the streets of Boston to their utmost capacity, are now inadequate.

In the early days the community lines were much simpler than they are at present. The various townships were of large extent, and correspondingly few in number. They

included town-like clusters of population, like Lynn, Charlestown and Cambridge; and also rustic farming hamlets, of which Lynn Village, now Lynnfield, and Charlestown Village, now Woburn, may be cited as representative examples. As these outlying villages grew, they formed natural centres by themselves, and, having their own peculiar local requirements, their needs bearing little relation to those of neighboring communities, — being of the simplest character and confined to such functions as schools, public worship and care of highways, together with looking out for interests that, for the most part, were distinctively agricultural, — independent local government became desirable, and when sought was readily granted.

In later days this movement of disintegration became accelerated by other considerations, such as situation with reference to lines of railway, differences in questions of local taxation, etc. Large town areas have been split up into smaller fragments. Towns have been divided and subdivided. Out of Chelsea, for instance, Revere and Winthrop have been created; from Malden came Melrose, Stoneham and Everett; from Charlestown proceeded Somerville, Woburn and Winchester; from Cambridge were carved Newton and Arlington; Belmont was formed from West Cambridge (Arlington) and Watertown; from Roxbury West Roxbury was set off; from Braintree, Quincy, Randolph and Holbrook; and Hyde Park has been formed from portions of Milton, West Roxbury and Dedham. Boston itself in the early days yielded to this disintegrating process, Brookline and Chelsea being her offspring.

Thus we have seen portions of townships becoming villages, then towns, and finally cities, until in Middlesex County alone we now have six separate cities immediately adjoining Boston, while on the north of the Charles and the Mystic, in Suffolk and Middlesex, the six cities of Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Somerville and Cambridge form one cluster of population in a manner that makes it impossible to detect, by anything that external characteristics have to tell, where one municipality leaves off and another begins. This disintegrating process has continued down almost to the present time. But, so far as the metropolitan district is

concerned, it now appears to be definitely checked ; the last attempt at town division, that of separating West Medford from Medford, having been finally and conclusively thwarted by the erection of Medford into a city.

The process of reintegration began in the earlier half of the century. It has been confined thus far to the city of Boston, to which South Boston and Washington Village, in Dorchester, were first joined ; Roxbury came next, followed by the whole of Dorchester, and then by Charlestown, West Roxbury and Brighton. This incomplete process has given Boston a most peculiar outline. Upon the map it now nearly encloses the town of Brookline as in the claws of a lobster, and on the other side Newton, in Middlesex, makes of Brookline a political island, cut off wholly from the rest of Norfolk County, to which it belongs.

These various divisions and subdivisions have resulted in most extraordinary boundary lines, forming all sorts of zigzag effects. To account for the eccentric character of these would be most puzzling for the stranger unacquainted with the circumstances that have produced them. Conspicuous examples of these remarkable results may be seen in the tongue, or “panhandle,” of Quincy, that runs up between Braintree, Randolph and Milton, and includes a large portion of the Blue Hill range ; and again, in the little piece jutting up in the north-west corner of Malden, thrust between Medford, Stoneham and Melrose, in the Middlesex Fells, and occasioned by the annexation of a strip of Medford to that place.

#### *4. Difficulty of the Municipal Problem here involved.*

We have, therefore, in this complexity of political units comprised in the metropolitan district of Boston a municipal problem that probably contains more difficulties in the way of its proper solution than can be found in any other centre of great population in the civilized world after that of London. On this continent, surely, New York is the only other metropolitan aggregation of population that presents difficulties anywhere near those encountered by Boston. In

the case of New York, however, they are rendered more easy of solution by the lesser number of political communities to be dealt with, while that portion of its metropolitan population west of the Hudson must necessarily always remain in another State, as a subject for entirely separate treatment.

If it were possible to consolidate all the various political units forming this great metropolitan community under one comprehensive municipal authority, all the questions affecting that community would be capable of easy solution, and would not require any method of procedure radically different from those concerning other cities and towns in the Commonwealth. Such a solution, however desirable though it might seem to be, appears, for the present at least, out of the question. Important problems, nevertheless, are now presenting themselves, and, if they are not speedily dealt with in a way that will yield results equal to what might be achieved were it all one community, politically as well as physically, serious injury to the interests of the entire population cannot fail to follow.

Manifestly the only practical way to deal with the needs felt in common by this cluster of politically independent communities is either to construct a new political entity that shall include them all, while perhaps their separate local existence is still maintained, or to meet these demands directly under the authority of the Commonwealth from which they derived their separate existences.

The former of these alternatives seems to be made impracticable for some time to come by the separation of various sections of this community upon county as well as local lines. Relatively unimportant as counties are in the political organization of New England, the erection of a new county to include the whole metropolitan community, as has lately been done in the case of London, would seem hardly practicable without a radical reconstruction of the entire county system of the Commonwealth.

It therefore remains to meet these needs directly under the authority of the State. One of these needs is that under immediate consideration, and it is one which cannot be deferred without burdening the future — for something





3. SPOT POND, STONEHAM.

which sooner or later certainly must be done — with a very great expense, where a relatively small outlay would now meet the requirements. Not only this, but delay would prevent these needs from being supplied in any but a most incomplete manner, whereas to-day they can still be provided for in a satisfactory way.

##### 5. *Various Needs that require Consideration.*

This problem is also largely one of sanitation, but having the wider scope of promoting the physical and moral health of the community. Nothing appears to be better settled than the fact that a population living under urban conditions, amidst the incessant activity, the noise, the confusion and the excitement incident to city life, must, for the maintenance of its health and the perpetuation of desirable types of humanity, be afforded frequent opportunities for the relaxation of the strain which these conditions of life impose ; and these opportunities are best found in the means of escape into more natural and agreeable surroundings.

Thereto must be added the requirements of the growing generations in the shape of ample playground facilities, situated within convenient distances of their homes, where sport and exercise in the open air may be obtained, developing the body and quickening the senses, while removing children from other modes of amusement, most detrimental physically and morally. Without resources of this kind the suburban movement of population, which has been hailed as presenting a complete solution to the tenement-house and other crying evils common to a dense population, would by no means prove the blessing anticipated. In fact, it would furnish only a very temporary benefit.

Through lack of foresight in this direction there are already, as we have seen, well settled expanses of suburban population, with acres and acres of streets and houses where a few years ago were pastures and woodland, possessing no open spaces whatever ; not a square foot of public ground outside of school-house yards and streets belonging to the cities and towns in question.

A few years, sooner or later, will witness all these suburban tracts completely urbanized; and, unless something is done in the near future, the only alternative to the perpetuation of a most unhealthy condition for these districts will be the clearing away, at enormous cost, of sufficient open spaces here and there to furnish local playgrounds, as is now being done in New York and London.

Preferable to a suburban development of this kind, such as the now rapidly increasing provision of transportation facilities in every direction is causing, without a corresponding provision for open spaces to meet the needs of this movement of population, would seem a concentration upon compact areas covered with dwellings such as modern science and art can devise, surrounding small squares or large court-yards that would supply playgrounds combined with pleasant gardens. However, the movement of population suburbanwards can be made all that is claimed for it by providing in time the needed breathing spaces, parks and playgrounds.

A third aspect of the problem is one which is more strictly sanitary in character, and is furnished by the present conditions of the streams and other water spaces, to prevent the pollution of which prompt attention and treatment is demanded. It would seem that the simplest, cheapest and most effective method of dealing with this problem, and therefore the most practical, is furnished by combining therewith the recreative purposes which a stream and its shores can usually be made to serve in most abundant measure.

#### *6. Local Jealousies a Bar to Satisfactory Results.*

It is also notoriously the case that cities and towns small in area and compact in population are apt to be extremely concerned lest other communities profit more than, or even equally with, themselves by improvements of this kind which they undertake. They are likely to be governed in the location of their pleasure grounds not so much by considerations of fitness in the selection of site as by the relation which it shall bear to the centre of population. Hence a site most admirably adapted for the purpose, but lying

near the boundary line, would in all probability be passed by in favor of some much inferior location, solely for fear that inhabitants of an adjacent community might profit by it.

Very fortunately, Boston itself has not been guided by such petty considerations in the creation of its noble park system. But with the small communities these considerations are almost sure to prevail. And whenever a most suitable site for the pleasure ground of any particular community chances to lie across the boundary in another town, but so remote from the centre of that town's population as to be of much less value to the latter, the community most interested has under present conditions no authority to establish such a pleasure ground beyond its own bounds. By treating the entire territory, however, as a unit for this purpose, the sense of a community of interest is developed. Consequently local jealousies are largely allayed, and the chief obstacles in the way of the adoption of a comprehensive system, which shall be of equal value to the entire community, are removed.

A case in point is presented by the beautiful spot in Cambridge known as "Norton's Woods," where a vestige of the original charm of aspect once worn by the entire countryside round about fortunately yet remains,—the only oasis in a great urban desert that now stretches westward nearly to the Waverley Oaks. Its kindly proprietor has long allowed its use as a pleasure ground to a considerable extent by people in the vicinity,—a boon that is much appreciated. The idea of a public park here has been much discussed, and there appears to be a general agreement as to its desirability. In the near neighborhood, on the Somerville side of the line, there are many humble homes, and an open space here would be a great blessing. So closely are the populations of the two cities merged that no line of demarcation is evident. It seems all one city. But Cambridge, as a municipality, cannot be induced to take an interest in the proposition, mainly for the reason that apparently Somerville will profit most by it; while Somerville would probably not be disposed to establish a pleasure ground for her people just beyond her borders, even if she had the right so to do.

7. *Drafts upon Local Resources through Rapid Growth an Impediment to Proper Dealing with this Question.*

One of the greatest obstacles, and the one perhaps the most difficult to be overcome, in the way of realizing, under the initiative of the respective communities, the establishment of the desired open spaces throughout the district, is the fact that in most cases their resources are strained to the utmost extent to meet the demands imposed by their rapid increase in population. The overflow of Boston into the surrounding country, the attractions of cheap lands and the consequent facilities for the building of low-priced houses in the suburban districts, has caused these various communities to fill up rapidly with a population composed of persons, for the most part, in very moderate circumstances. Therefore, in many of these suburban cities and towns the increase in valuation has not been at all commensurate with the increase of population. The demands thereby made upon them for facilities to meet the necessities of this extraordinarily rapid growth have been in excess of the resources available to satisfy the demands, and on nearly every side complaint is made of a growing burden of taxation in consequence. The suburban communities find themselves obliged to incur great expenditures for the erection of new school-houses, for the laying out of new streets and building of sidewalks, for the extension of water-supply service, for the construction of sewers, etc. All these appear absolutely necessary, and the people are continually clamoring for them.

The importance of assuring the continued attractiveness of these suburban localities, of making them permanently agreeable localities for the abiding places of a desirable class of population, is thereby apt to be overlooked.

The average short-sightedness is too often such that people do not consider that the charms that make many of our suburbs the pleasant dwelling-places that they now are—namely, the various rural attractions existing in their midst or in their near neighborhoods—must for the most part certainly disappear as with the growth of population the character of these localities becomes more and more urban.





4. EAST SHORE OF LAKE QUANNAPOWITT, WAKEFIELD. After a photograph by E. U. Gleason.

They are, however, liable some day to awake suddenly to the unpleasant consciousness that their charm has vanished.

Local breathing-spaces, and the existence of pleasant features of natural scenery in the neighborhood, are really as essential to the moral and physical health of a community as the more absolutely utilitarian improvements that are usually given the precedence. But, as we have seen, the extraordinary drain upon the resources of our communities is mostly such that they either will not or cannot do anything in this direction.

The only practical way, therefore, to deal with this subject appears to be by a metropolitan method of procedure, and in a manner that will relieve the individual communities from the pressure upon their resources which they otherwise would have to endure in order to accomplish anything of any account in this direction.

## II.

### THE LOGICAL METHOD OF SOLVING THIS PROBLEM.

Boston has, until very lately, grown in a most accidental and hap-hazard way. It has cost the city more to undo the mistakes perpetrated through the short-sightedness of former generations than it has to provide for its legitimate growth. It is, therefore, time for it to grow intelligently, and to proceed along carefully considered lines of development. These lines have already been laid down, or are now being laid down, in several important directions, and their extension in others is thereby made all the more desirable.

#### *1. The Best Instrumentality for securing the Desired Ends.*

The instrumentality for securing the establishment of the various open spaces desired under the control of a Metropolitan Parks Commission would seem to be most easily, systematically and economically provided under the so-called "Australian method," which within the past few years has been applied in other directions with most excellent results.

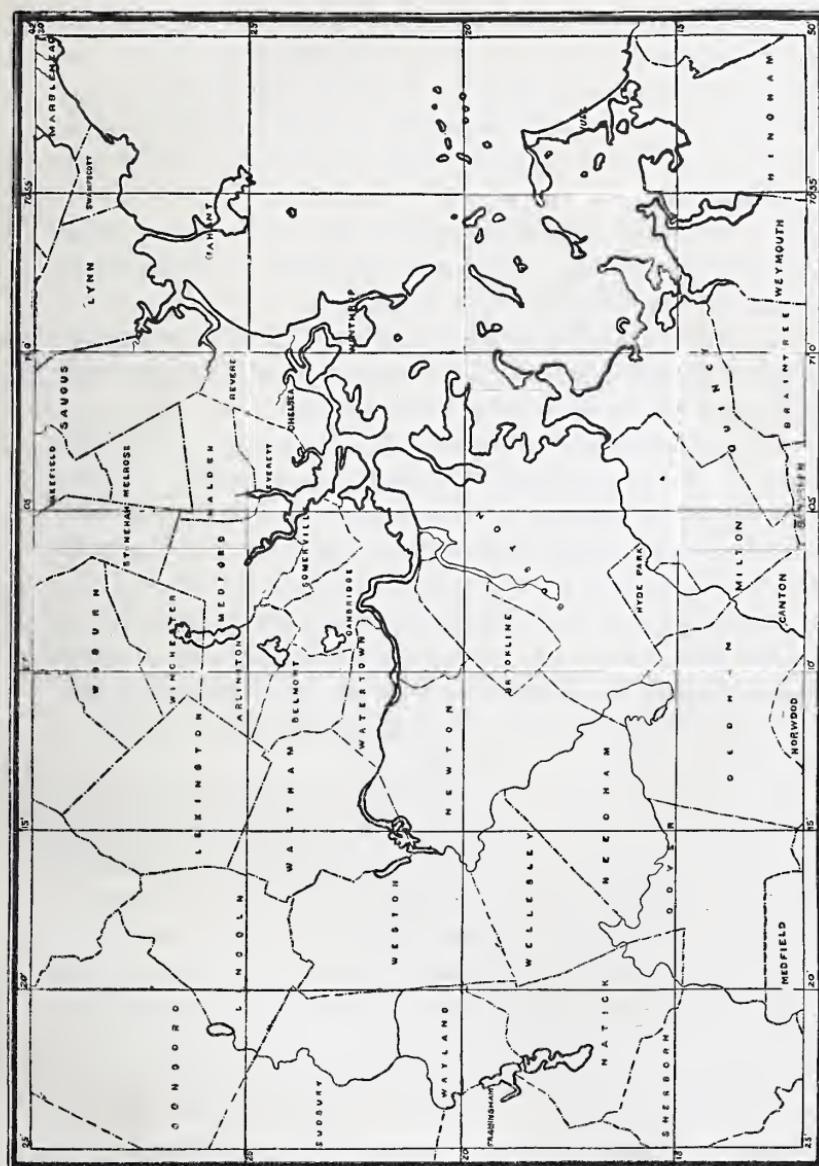
Fortunately a precedent has lately been furnished which

very clearly points out the way that should be followed in dealing with the problem. The metropolitan sewerage act has met the needs of this large territory in a very satisfactory manner. The machinery necessary to supply the need under consideration should follow very similar lines. That is, for the Commonwealth to lend its credit, to a certain specified amount, in the shape of a loan, for which reimbursement will be obtained from the various communities forming the metropolitan district. By this means, while the Commonwealth is put to no expense in thus advancing its credit, the procedure is made an easy one for the communities. The payments being so distributed over a long term of years, an excessive taxation is not imposed, and the burden therefore weighs but lightly upon any one community. Moreover, the credit of the Commonwealth enables the money to be obtained at much lower rates than the communities themselves could hope to obtain advantage of, making a net saving of something like one per cent. in interest.

A loan of one million dollars, secured upon such terms,—together with what may be looked for in the way of local co-operation and of private beneficence, induced by the policy of consultation and encouragement in relation to local authorities and individuals which a Metropolitan Parks Commission would be enabled to pursue,—the most important landscape features that have been under consideration throughout the metropolitan district could be permanently reserved for the benefit of the public.

These features, in brief, may be specified as follows:—

1. *At least one of the important islands of the bay that still remain as private property.*
2. *Permanent rights for the public in the shore at Revere Beach.*
3. *The Snake Creek Valley, lying on the borders of Chelsea and Revere.*
4. *A sufficient amount of territory in the Middlesex Fells region, lying within the limits of Malden, Medford, Melrose, Stoneham and Winchester, to make one large public forest reservation in that most important and desirable locality, in connection with what has already been set apart by the various*



Municipal Boundaries in the Neighborhood of Boston.

'neighboring communities for water supply and recreative purposes.

5. *A reservation near the Mystic River, in the neighborhood of the creek known as Island End River in Everett and Chelsea, including marshland and upland, capable of becoming of great importance for recreative purposes to both of those cities, as well as to Boston, whose Charlestown district lies close at hand.*

6. *The wild tract lying within the limits of the West Roxbury district of Boston and the town of Hyde Park, known as "the Muddy Pond woods."*

7. *The Blue Hills range in Milton, Quincy, Canton and Braintree, with adjacent wild lands and lake country to the southward, as a mountain-like public forest.*

From a consideration of assessed valuations in the various portions of the metropolitan district, it is fair to estimate that it will be possible to secure these various features for a total amount which will leave a large sum to be applied to other important purposes that have been mentioned, such as the securing of land and rights along the Charles River, which will guard that stream forever against the dangers arising from the pollution to which it is now subjected, and also to pursue a similar course in relation to the valleys of the Neponset and Mystic rivers.

Assurances of generous co-operation have also been received from various individuals of public spirit and of large means which will be likely to bring about the reservation of other important and very desirable features of landscape interest, notable both for their remarkable picturesque qualities and for their historic associations. In this connection may be mentioned such localities as the Waverley Oaks, on the borders of Waltham and Belmont, the charming region of Prancer's Pond in Saugus that includes the historic feature known as "Appleton's Pulpit," and a long and beautiful stretch of the shores of the Charles River in Weston.

The question of purely local pleasure grounds, ranging in size from an acre or less to a few acres in extent, serving as "breathing spots," out-door resting places and playgrounds for their immediate neighborhoods, and which consequently demand to be located at very frequent intervals throughout



5. ONE OF THE MALDEN CLIFFS.



an urban population, is one of the most important under consideration. It, however, involves different problems, demands a different form of treatment, and therefore must be considered separately from the other classes of reservations, that comprise features more or less connected with each other.

*2. Cost of Acquiring the Proposed Lands.—Aid from Private Beneficence.*

If these sites are not now secured, their destruction at no remote day is sure. Even though in some of these instances the land might remain comparatively unoccupied for years to come, their present attractive character would be certain to disappear. Observations made in all parts of the metropolitan district lead to these conclusions. The land would, in many cases perhaps, remain cheap. But it should be remembered that cheap lands, when of a picturesque character, are costly to develop in the proper manner for residence purposes. Yet their very cheapness makes them a continuous temptation for improper and undesirable occupation. So that when at last the time came imperatively requiring something to be done for meeting the needs of the great population, the sites would nearly, if not quite, have lost all of their present attractiveness. While they might remain cheap, they would certainly have become nasty. That such a fate would be sure to overtake them is predicated by the experiences of Boston in the creation of some of the most essential features of its park system, the cost of which, through neglect to take up the problem in time, has been enormously increased.

The cost of obtaining the various reservations suggested will be comparatively small, in view of the amount of territory obtained and its extreme desirability for recreative purposes. Beside what would be obtained by purchase, several important features of the system under consideration can unquestionably be secured through the generosity of citizens of wealth and public spirit.

From estimates upon the averages of assessed valuations, it is reasonable to conclude that an expenditure of one million dollars, together with what might be looked for from

private beneficence, will secure the reservation of the most important of the sites that have been considered, amounting in the aggregate to several thousand acres.

This expenditure is trivial in comparison with the cost of constructing a single fort or mortar battery on the shores of the bay, or a ship of war, or even a new court-house or city hall; while the benefits received are incomparable in comparison. The national government is now going to an enormous expense for the construction of fortifications for harbor defence. This expenditure within the limits of a single small town on Boston bay amounts to something like two and one-half million dollars. A million dollars is a small sum for the construction of the average modern ship of war. In both of these cases it is doubtful if the object of such outlays would ever be of direct utility. Probably no hostile shot will ever be fired from the fortifications, and never would the war-ship know the smoke of battle. So rapid is progress in the arts of war to-day, that the ship becomes unserviceable for its intended purpose in the course of a few years.

Even the costliest municipal edifices, well as they may serve their purposes, sooner or later fall into ruin. They begin to deteriorate at the very start; and, though they may remain as architectural monuments for one or two centuries, their duration is as naught in comparison with that of the public pleasure ground, whose beauty increases, whose value augments, as the years go on.

It therefore seems of prime importance that these reservations should be secured. Their development could then safely be left to a future time, and would be effected by degrees.

### 3. *Sanitary Improvements promoted by Recreative Treatment. — Protecting Water Supplies.*

Another class of reservations than those required more strictly for recreative purposes is comprised in those connected with questions of health and drainage. These are to be regarded as perhaps first in pressing importance, but they involve problems of a more extended and intricate nature.

The Charles River and the valleys of the Neponset and Mystic are the most prominent of these, involving engineering problems more or less complex, which can only be dealt with properly by a Metropolitan Parks Commission, acting in concurrence with the State and local boards of health.

Of these three river valleys the Charles appears to be the one most immediately demanding attention. The Boston Park Board found itself called upon to deal with a very similar problem in the matter of the Back Bay Fens and the valley of the Muddy River, which involved two great drainage undertakings whose neglect was threatening the very existence of the Back Bay section of Boston and a large portion of the town of Brookline as desirable places of residence. Through the skill and taste of the engineering and landscape experts employed, it was found that the cheapest and most effective manner of dealing with these questions was through their development as portions of a grand parkway, thereby serving a valuable recreative as well as sanitary purpose. The Charles River can in a similar way be most effectively, permanently and cheaply treated, meeting recreative ends to a great extent.

A third class of public open spaces are those that mainly serve to augment and protect a water supply. It is often essential that a considerable tract of land should be taken for the purpose of guarding a water supply against pollution. The conditions under which such a tract must be maintained to serve best its purpose—free from human occupancy and kept in as natural a condition as possible, for the most part covered with a varied forest-growth, and including storage basins of a lake-like character—are such as often to adapt the territory also to purposes of recreation. Of such a type is a large proportion of the Lynn woods, the beautiful territory of more than two thousand acres reserved for public purposes by the joint action of the park and water boards of that city. In the Middlesex Fells, also, there are extensive water supply reservations, and again others exist at various points along the Charles River, while to the southward of the Blue Hills lie the sources of the water supplies of Quincy, Braintree and other communities in that section. To guard these sources from pollution, it is essential that

considerable tracts should be kept free from all danger of harmful occupation. Therefore, in securing lands for recreative purposes in the various directions that have been under consideration, the needs of the communities for water supply will to a large extent naturally enter into account, and a co-operation between the water boards and a Metropolitan Parks Commission is likely in many cases to be desirable and of mutual service.

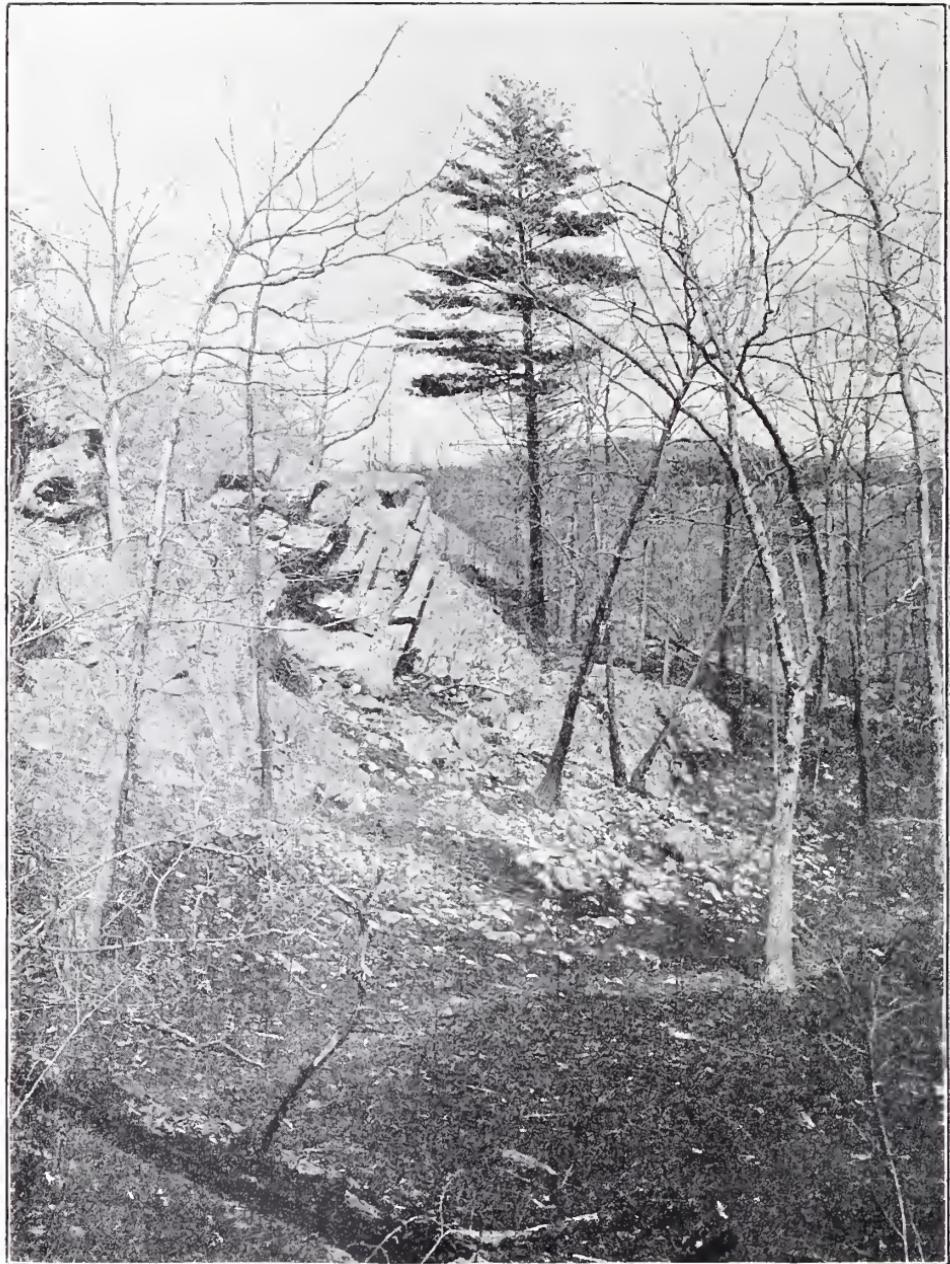
#### *4. Constituent Communities of the Metropolitan District.*

In regard to the cities and towns which should comprise the metropolitan district, it will necessarily be a matter of considerable difficulty to decide as to just what communities should be included. This difficulty arises more especially in relation to the outer fringe of communities. It is evident that distance alone does not form a decisive factor so much as does the way in which the individual community is involved with the rest of the district, either socially or geographically. A circle drawn with a radius of eleven miles from the Boston city hall will touch practically every city and town which it seems desirable to include, while perhaps one or two towns thus touched are, by their isolated character, not in any way connected with the interests of such a district. As to the extreme limits, a circle with a radius of fifteen miles would include the territory of all the communities which enter within the circle of eleven miles radius.

Some of these communities on the outer fringe should be included simply because certain landscape features that are essential to the proposed system in its completeness lie partially within their limits. Their interest in such a system as communities, however, would be relatively slight for many years to come, and for the most part the communities on the outer fringe would naturally be expected to bear little or no share of the expense when the apportionment according to benefit is made.

Other communities should also be included, not that any of the main features that have been considered lie within their limits, but because they possess interesting and impor-





6. A CRAG NEAR THE BEAR'S DEN, MALDEN.  
After a photograph by Francis W. Morandi.

tant landscape characteristics of their own, capable of becoming of great interest and value to the rest of the metropolitan community, and which, therefore, under the policy of consultation and encouragement which the proposed commission would be expected to adopt in relation to the needs of the various communities, might be made of much greater account, and therefore developed in a far more effective way, than would be the case were these communities to remain outside. Their share of the cost of a metropolitan system would for an indefinite period likewise remain extremely slight.

The city of Lynn, for instance, has most commendably provided itself with one of the largest public pleasure grounds belonging to any city in the United States, and has adopted a wise and far-seeing policy in the establishment of other grounds for recreative purposes. If this were the only factor in the case, there would be little call for including that city within the district. But, bearing in mind the principle of consultation and encouragement, it may be seen that Lynn would be a very important factor, and ultimately capable of gaining much through the development of its own admirable park system in harmony with the other metropolitan features. Its proportion of the expense of a metropolitan system, however, would naturally be small.

The towns of Nahant, Swampscott and Saugus, adjacent to Lynn, are included for similar reasons. Nahant possesses two magnificent beaches, which form almost the only stretch of ocean shore of any considerable extent near Boston that is now public ground; Swampscott, as a population, is in unbroken continuity with Lynn, and practically forms a portion of the same, while it contains some of the most charming stretches of seashore in this part of the world; Saugus is likewise intimately connected with Lynn, and possesses landscape features of exceptional attractiveness, the reservation of which it is desirable to bring about so far as possible.

Of other communities to the northward, Wakefield and Woburn may be placed in a like category. To the westward and southward, Weston, Wellesley, Needham and Dedham lie upon the outer fringe of the district, and are included

solely because of the relations which they bear to the Charles River, all of which, in its course from Dedham down to the sea, it is important should be made a subject of metropolitan control.

The towns of Canton and Braintree should be included on account of the Blue Hill territory, important portions of which lie within their limits.

Two other places, Weymouth and Hingham, must be included solely as being shore towns, and on account of problems which may arise in relation to the borders of the bay, some of the most beautiful portions of which lie within their bounds. It is also highly desirable that Hull should form a portion of the district, because of Nantasket beach, one of the most popular and important shore resorts for the people of Boston, and also because some of the principal islands in the bay are portions of this town.

### III.

#### SPECIAL ADVANTAGES THAT WILL FOLLOW THE ADOPTION OF THIS PLAN.

In considering the stake which Boston itself has in the establishment of such a metropolitan park system, notwithstanding so much has been done within its own limits, the same factor of a community of interests appears. In the first report of the Boston Park Commissioners, written by Mr. Charles H. Dalton, regret was expressed that the commission could not go beyond the limits of the city for the establishment of certain desirable features of its park system. The city of New York a few years ago acquired one of its largest and finest park sites outside of its own limits, on the shore of Long Island Sound, in the town of Pelham, in Westchester County. London has gone far beyond its bounds in establishing some of its recent parks, and the great reservation of Epping Forest was restored to public use through the exertions of the corporation of the city of London. Burnham Beeches, a favorite park of the people of the British metropolis, also established by the same corporation, lies much farther to the westward of London's

centre of population than Framingham does from Boston. Following this analogy, we may look forward to the time when the extensive reservations of the Boston water board about the Sudbury River basins, occupying a very beautiful country, will be of valuable service as pleasure grounds for the people of metropolitan Boston. The South Park system of Chicago was originally established to a great extent outside the city limits in the towns of Lake and Hyde Park, recently merged in the enlarged city.

### *1. Direct Value of an Attractive Environment to Boston.*

There are, therefore, good reasons why Boston should bear its proportion of the cost of acquiring these metropolitan reservations.

Not only is this proposed action of great value to Boston in securing desirable sites for such pleasure grounds in all directions about the city for the benefit of its teeming and rapidly increasing population, but it is of equal value in assuring the permanence and increase of one of the most essential elements of the city's present and future development; that is, its attractiveness as a great and thoroughly equipped social centre.

The number of persons drawn to Boston by its general advantages in the way of a beautiful and well-eared-for modern capital—its educational facilities, its music, its museums, its artistic character and its beautiful suburban and rural surroundings—is enormous. The numbers increase extensively year by year, and this forms one of the chief elements in a city's growth in desirable population and in its marvellously augmenting prosperity.

It is therefore essential that these elements of attractiveness should be maintained and enhanced, and their permanence assured. Many of these picturesque and beautiful sites in the surrounding country form features by no means slight among these elements of attractiveness. Hence it seems important that these various tracts should be immediately acquired, for the reason that all of them can now be secured at comparatively small cost, and all would be for the common benefit of the metropolitan district.

*2. Advantages accruing to Local Communities from Pleasure Grounds beyond their Limits.*

It has been made evident that the interests of these various cities and towns are, for the various general purposes for which public services are performed, identical. The physical conformation of the territory also requires that in this matter of providing the needed open spaces for recreative and sanitary purposes, such a unitary policy should be adopted. Not only are the various features that thus demand consideration from a metropolitan point of view in most instances contained within the limits of several cities and towns, but interesting sites which are of particular value to the inhabitants of one community are, as likely as not, apt to be situated beyond the limits of that community.

The interests of a city or town in this respect can therefore not be centred upon any particular locality within its own limits, except from the one sordid point of view of improving the assessable value of real estate. And even here this limitation cannot be strictly made, for the desirability of a community as a place of residence, and therefore the value of real property there, is often determined, to a considerable extent, by the landscape features lying outside of its own limits.

For instance, the town of Brookline, which is one of the most prosperous and best equipped communities in the Commonwealth, owes much of its attractiveness to the fact that the public pleasure grounds of Boston lie in its near neighborhood, including such features as Franklin Park, the Arnold Arboretum, the beautiful driveway around the Chestnut Hill Reservoir, and Jamaica Pond and its shores,—a system of improvements upon which Boston has expended millions of dollars, but which, enjoyed by the inhabitants of neighboring cities and towns without cost to themselves, form for the people of Brookline in particular favorite resorts in their drives and rides.

The same will hold true in regard to the various other grounds that may be established in various parts of the metropolitan district. They will be of value not only to the cities and towns wherein they are located, but also to all the communities round about.



7. CASCADE NEAR FELLS STATION, MELROSE. After a photograph by George H. Davenport.



## PART SECOND.

---

### I.

#### AN EXAMINATION OF THE SEPARATE FEATURES UNDER CONSIDERATION.

The investigations of the commission have included personal examinations of the various features throughout the metropolitan district that have been suggested as adapted to form a part of a general system of open spaces for public recreation and the promotion of health. In making the trips necessary to these examinations, the board has been accompanied by members of the local park commissions or committees and other local officials, together with citizens interested in the subject. The commissioners have thus been enabled to ascertain, to a great degree, the local sentiment in regard to the desires and needs of the communities more directly interested, as well as to obtain a knowledge of the most notable local features of natural scenery.

### II.

#### BOSTON BAY,—ITS ISLANDS AND SHORES.

First in order in the line of inquiry adopted came the opportunities afforded by Boston harbor and bay and their shores for aquatic and water-side recreation. The harbor and bay, with their surroundings, throughout the summer months, form perhaps the most popular pleasure ground of the entire metropolitan region. The water surface, of course, is free to all, and must ever remain so. But it is otherwise with the shores and islands, upon the condition and

aspect of which much of the pleasure derivable from the recreative use of the water depends.

The city of Boston, in creating its new parks, has indeed recognized this fact, and in the Marine Park at City Point in South Boston,—including Castle Island, which, through the generosity of the national government, has been placed at the disposition of the park department, and recently connected with the mainland as a portion of the park,—together with the water-side drive or parkway along the shores of Dorchester Bay or Old Harbor, uniting the Marine Park with other portions of the park system, has made an important beginning for the water-side recreation of the people. This provision, however, does not begin to meet the requirements in this direction that for the great metropolitan population will exist in the near future. It is therefore desirable that ample provisions should be made while the opportunity exists.

The advantages presented by the islands in the bay naturally first suggest themselves. These islands are mostly public property, belonging either to the city of Boston or to the national government, and are occupied by public institutions of various kinds, or by fortifications for harbor defense. Of those not so occupied, and still remaining in private or semi-private hands, there are two which appear to be particularly well adapted to utilization for public recreation. While they might not be immediately available, it would seem worth while to secure them and hold them in reserve for the needs of the future.

One of these, Peddock's Island, is the largest in the bay, and has the advantage of lying near its entrance, at the main ship channel. There are extensive views from its prominent elevations over the animated maritime scenes presented by the constant movement of ocean commerce in and out of the port, and the place is exposed to a freer sweep of the ocean breezes than the inner islands of the bay. It could easily be connected with the city and the communities of the southerly side of the bay by the steamers plying to and from Nantasket, Hull, Hingham and Downer's Landing.

The second is Thompson's Island, lying within the limits of Boston. Should it ever be found desirable to remove the Farm School now occupying it to some convenient locality on the main land, as has been suggested in the interests of that institution, the island might most appropriately be made a portion of the Boston park system. It could easily be connected with the Marine Park, close by, by a service of electric or steam launches, and as a narrow channel only separates it from the main land at Squantum peninsula, in Quincy, it could easily be joined thereto by a bridge, the right to establish which already exists. This would make it accessible from the Dorchester district, as well as from Quincy and other communities of the south shore. The well-grown plantations of trees, both deciduous and evergreen, that mark this island, add greatly to its beauty and attractiveness.

About the only island now belonging to the city of Boston that is not occupied for public purposes is Apple Island, in the northerly portion of the bay, lying near East Boston and Winthrop. It is a small island containing a little less than nine acres, but is given an exceptional prominence and attractiveness by a group of handsome elm trees. It would seem an excellent idea for the city to transfer this island to the park department, which eventually might improve it and connect it with Wood Island Park in East Boston by a service of launches.

In Hingham bay, near the village of Hull, lies Bumkin Island, with an area of 33.7 acres. It belongs to Harvard College, and as it is at present barren and unimproved, the idea naturally suggests itself that an admirable use of it would be for the University to give it in charge of its important department, the Arnold Arboretum, which might put it to good service as an experiment station for arboriculture under maritime conditions.

### *1. Restoring the Tree-covering on the Islands.*

The appearance of the bay is a matter that is of deep interest to Boston and its vicinity, and not only from a

recreative stand-point, for the question also has its economic considerations. The bay is one of the most attractive features of Boston, and, if measures can be devised to increase that attractiveness, which is the means of bringing strangers hither from all parts of the country to enjoy the advantages presented by a highly developed community, and particularly if these measures can be carried out at a small cost, it would be folly not to undertake them. The great fault of the bay, from a landscape point of view, lies in the barren aspect of its islands and shores, the hard and naked lines of their thin slopes covered only with turf, and unrelieved, except in rare instances, by any trees, or even shrubbery. These islands and shores were formerly well clothed with woods, which were cut away in the colonial days.

The subject of the restoration of this tree-covering, so far as practicable and advisable, was considered in a most instructive and interesting way in the annual report of the Boston Park Commissioners for 1887, which included the report of Mr. Frederick Law Olmsted, as landscape architect advisory of the department, upon a communication from the Boston Memorial Association, urging that comprehensive steps be taken in this direction. In view of the interest and importance of Mr. Olmsted's report, and the many facts in it not elsewhere easily found, I venture to append a copy of it to this statement, and hope it may be printed with it. [See Appendix F.] It will be observed that Mr. Olmsted points to the remarkable use made of Boston bay for recreative purposes, showing that, with the possible exception of Venice, the people of no other city in the world have made such good use of their harbor, otherwise than commercial, as those of Boston have long been accustomed to do.

The bay being the circumstance that caused the foundation of Boston and its development as a great city, bearing the character of the main portal of the New England metropolis, it is appropriate that it should be treated in a manner worthy of that character. Therefore it is to be hoped that the recommendations then made, and which, unfortunately, failed to receive favorable action, may yet be





8. ISLAND END CREEK AND MYSTIC RIVER, EVERETT.

carried out, as they easily can be, in the most systematic way and at a very small expense.

## 2. *The South Shore.*

Turning to the shores of the bay, attention is almost necessarily at once attracted to the remarkably picturesque and beautiful promontory of Squantum, which, although within the limits of the city of Quincy, belongs to the city of Boston, having been taken for the use of the sewer department in the building of the great sewer that passes under Dorchester Bay by a tunnel, and by a causeway to its point of discharge at Moon Island. The city of Boston owns sixteen acres at this point, and it would be easy to arrange for its use for park purposes without interfering with the operations of the department. Being, however, outside the limits of Boston, it would naturally come within the scope of open spaces under consideration. It has long been a favorite objective point for people driving to the shore from Quincy and other communities to the southward of Boston. It offers one of the most beautiful and varied views over the bay. It would naturally be united with the other drive along the margin of Quincy bay, which the park department of that city now has under consideration. The causeway carrying the line of the sewer to Moon Island offers an opportunity for the extension of the drive to that place. Should the proposition ever be carried out to extend the sewer under the harbor and along Long Island to an outlet in Broad Sound near that of the north metropolitan sewer from Deer Island, Moon Island might be converted into a most desirable portion of this possible system of pleasure ways and grounds.

Another suggestion that has been made merits mention here. It is proposed to carry the high-level system of sewerage, designed for the upland portions of Dorchester, Roxbury, West Roxbury and of the south metropolitan sewerage district beyond, to an independent connection with the outlet at Moon Island, to avoid the expense of

pumping at the Calf Pasture station. Instead of carrying this sewer under the bay, by tunnel or otherwise, as in the case of the present sewer, it might be better to construct a causeway across Dorchester Bay from the Calf Pasture to Squantum. This causeway could form a most attractive feature of the Boston park system, by carrying a parkway connected with the Boston parkways that are designed to connect with the Marine Park by way of the shore of the old harbor across to Squantum, to a connection with the proposed Quincy system.

This causeway would also make a full basin of that portion of Dorchester Bay and the estuary of the Neponset River lying within it, adding greatly to its beauty. A drawbridge and a lock would give access to vessels, and it is held that the value of the basin thus enclosed would be enhanced for commercial purposes, as it would provide a good depth of navigable water at all times.

### *3. Nantasket Beach and the Hills and Shores at Hull.*

The remaining portion of the southerly shores of the bay that more immediately concerns the metropolitan population is Nantasket Beach and the neighboring heights, together with the beaches and elevated points in and near the village of Hull. Nantasket Beach is frequented by great multitudes in the summer months, and it seems desirable that some measures should be taken to give the public a permanent right to the use of its inestimable privileges of seaside recreation, while the heights near the beach, and particularly near the village of Hull, — such as Telegraph Hill, a historic locality by reason of its old fortifications remaining from the war of 1812, — are valuable as outlook points commanding noble views over the entrance to the bay and neighboring shores.

### *4. The Hingham, Weymouth and Braintree Shores.*

The water fronts of the towns of Hingham, Weymouth and Braintree are of striking beauty, with their varied and

well-wooded shores reaching far into the interior; but as the two former towns, at least, are at present only somewhat remotely connected with the metropolitan population, and as there appear to be no problems of immediate importance connected therewith, it would seem that the conservation of the natural features may for the present be safely left to the local authorities. In this connection attention may be called to the small rocky islands in Hingham harbor. The work of Mr. Brewer, their owner, in planting them with trees and shrubs and caring for them in a way that enhances their natural beauty, is worthy of all praise. They add greatly to the charm of the approach to the town by water,—the line of steamboats forming a favorite route through the summer,—and care should be taken to see that their present character is permanently preserved.

5. *The North Shore.—Winthrop: a Typical Illustration of Detrimental Real Estate Development.*

The northerly shores of the bay are close to the denser portions of the metropolitan population, and therefore are of corresponding importance in their relation to the seaside needs of the public. The town of Winthrop presents certain problems of the situation in a typical way and in compact form. This town, by reason of its increased accessibility through improved railway facilities, has experienced an enormous proportional increase in population, being the second community in the State in its percentage of growth, as exhibited in the census of 1890. The rate for the decade was 161.4 per cent., the population growing from 1,043 in 1880 to 2,726 in 1890. Not only has its permanent population increased so remarkably, but its ease of access from Boston, together with its situation, with the waters of the inner bay on one side and the open sea on the other, have made it extremely attractive for a very large summer population. The town's area has, therefore, been built over very extensively, but in a way that unfortunately does not give promise for the permanent attractiveness which a place

of such great natural advantages should and easily could possess.

The circumstances just alluded to have made the town the scene of active real-estate speculation. There are few things in which the future is regarded with such short-sighted vision as in the ordinary class of real-estate operations, which, as usually conducted, are apt in the long run to form a serious obstacle to the healthy and natural growth of a large population. Taking advantage of the natural attractiveness of a locality, they not only seldom do anything towards maintaining it, but, through the manner in which operations are conducted, they tend to destroy such attractiveness as effectively as if that were their main object. A beautiful stretch of seashore, or a lakeside, or pleasant woodland hills, are often the features that draw the attention of real-estate operators to a locality, and furnish the bait through which they effect their sales. But with the building up of a population, the very features that first induced its settlement are too often either destroyed and disfigured, or the operations are so conducted that the occupiers of the territory are for the most part deprived of nearly all use and enjoyment thereof.

Unfortunately, the promoters of the real-estate enterprises that have built up many large sections of our suburban communities have either not been identified with the real interests of the communities wherein they operated, or, if citizens of the place, have been too short-sighted to look any distance into the future. The sole idea actuating enterprises of this character is to sell the largest number of lots in the shortest possible space of time, clean up their sales, so to speak, and take themselves to some new field of operations, after which their interest in the community ceases. The sites having the greatest market value are naturally those occupying the shore front or the other best points of view. But while these sites are usually among the first disposed of, realizing handsome prices, their occupancy cuts off the rest of the inhabitants from the privileges of the shore or from the other advantages that have been the main consideration in attracting them thither. It may be observed that it is





9. SNAKE CREEK, CHELSEA AND REVERE.

often the case in the development of these properties that after the choicest have been sold the remaining lots are disposed of with difficulty. Therefore but few of these real-estate enterprises are on record as having met the expectations of their founders. At the best they have served for speculative booms in which a few have prospered, while the enterprise as a whole has met with adversity.

The reasons for these results are largely to be found in the improper and short-sighted method of planning the property. A truly enlightened and liberal policy in such enterprises would be to identify them permanently with the welfare of the community, and so shape them that they will always fit in to the natural circumstances of the place in a way to promote steadily its attractiveness and prosperity.

Winthrop is blessed by nature with a remarkably beautiful and favorable situation; particularly favorable indeed as a water-side residence for business men from the great city that lies but half an hour away by rail and ferryboat. Salt water lies on three sides of the town, and it has a strikingly varied and extensive shore. Bold uplands command magnificent views of sea and land in all directions, and between are many pleasant sites for dwellings. Yet the uplands have, for the most part, been so occupied as nearly to destroy their utility for the community as a whole, and the shore front has also been occupied chiefly to the temporary advantage of the private few and the permanent detriment of the public many. Although certain portions of the shore are laid out in an attractive manner and occupied with dwellings of a high class, by the transformation of old farms and country-residence estates into what are known as "residence parks," yet it is with considerable astonishment that one learns, in passing over these places, that even in case of the roads which run close to the shore the land on the water-side of these ways is to be disposed of in private lots. Instead of making these roads what they should be, beautiful shore drives that shall perpetually secure to the residents near by, who are attracted solely by the present charms of the site, the glorious views over the bay with its islands and distant shores which they

now command, the land between the roads and the water is also to be disposed of and cut up into house lots like the rest.

The residents of these neighborhoods will thus eventually be permanently shut out from access to the shore, and from their present invaluable prospects over the water. And, while these water-side lots may, for the time being, be occupied by an attractive class of houses, sooner or later they are liable to become covered, as has elsewhere been the case, with a more and more objectionable class of construction, until finally all advantages that originally belonged to the site will have disappeared, and, so far as its advantage to the people of the town is concerned, the sea may as well not exist at all.

#### *6. A Warning Example from England.*

This form of harmful occupation of the shore and the exclusion of the public from all the benefits derivable from the immediate neighborhood of the sea exists to-day to a marked degree in many portions of England. Dr. Edward Everett Hale, in his recent visit to that country, traversed a road that passed close by the sea; but for several miles all sight of the water was shut off by high hedges, and the local guide books called particular attention to a certain opening, where passers-by were advised to stop and enjoy the broad view over the sea that might be obtained from the spot! Not impossibly the famous Jerusalem Road in Cohasset may at no remote day be subjected to similar treatment with a like result.

Perhaps the people of Boston may likewise eventually be excluded from all sight of the sea along a great extent of the shore in their neighborhood, and may be compelled to pay for the privilege of looking through peep-holes in fences or hedges upon the unfamiliar sight of the ocean surf.

#### *7. How Best to promote a Healthy Local Growth.*

The most fitting and economical method of promoting the prosperous growth of a town would be to secure and define





10. BELLE ISLE CREEK AND BREED'S ISLAND,

all the future highways in accordance with the natural topography of the territory by some instrumentality such as Boston has adopted in its board of survey. In this way the manner of its future development would be assured and costly mistakes would be avoided. In the case of a town like Winthrop, for instance, the shore line, which constitutes a most valuable asset in the natural endowments of the place, should be secured entirely for the benefit of the community as a whole and the neighboring roads laid out in conformity thereto. The tops of the various hills should then be reserved to furnish points of view over the remarkably beautiful landscapes which they command. Thus equipped, these elements would be found of unspeakable financial value in assuring a constant and steadily increasing prosperity for the place.

#### *8. Notable Local Features in Winthrop.*

Upon one circumstance Winthrop is to be congratulated, and that is that the highway runs directly along the beach between the bold promontory known as Winthrop Great Head and Grover's Cliff in the section called Ocean Spray. Although the beach remains the private property of the abutters on the other side of the road, yet to all intents and purposes it is public, for the deeds to purchasers have been made out in such a way that the shore is held by them in common, and cannot be occupied for any private purposes.

It should also be mentioned that the beach between Winthrop Great Head and Point Shirley, along which the line of the Boston, Winthrop & Shore Railroad formerly ran, still belongs to the railway company, now merged in the Boston, Revere Beach & Lynn, so that it would probably not be a difficult matter to secure public permanent rights in this stretch of shore. The line of the North Metropolitan sewer, on its way to its outlet at the further end of Deer Island, also passes along this beach, and the title to the land thus occupied vests in the Commonwealth.

In the midst of the town, near the Boston harbor side of

the water front, lies a swampy tract of considerable area, which the owner, a public-spirited lady, proposes to give to the town for park purposes, and which is capable of utilization for a local playground without incurring a very great outlay for improvement.

In the centre of the town are the extensive works, well advanced towards completion, for the mortar battery of thirty-two pieces, now under construction by the national government. This fortification and its armament will cost considerably over a million dollars. It is expected that the site, which occupies a considerable area, will serve the people to a great degree as a local pleasure ground, under certain restrictions. On Grover's Cliff, on the north-easterly shore of the town, a strong battery of three monster long-range guns is also under construction. This will likewise cost an enormous sum.

It is pertinent to reflect to what a great extent this outlay for military purposes in a single town—an outlay which is but a fraction of that proposed for the construction of similar works on various portions of the shore and islands of the bay—would go in providing the entire metropolitan district with its desired system of pleasure grounds. It is to be hoped that the day may come when the expenditure of untold sums which the public readily incurs for the destruction of human life may cease, and a fractional part at least of the amounts now so spent be devoted to the prolongation of human life and the making of that life the more worth the living, through supplying the real wants of a civilized people.

#### *9. Revere: Invaluable Character of the Magnificent Beach.*

The shore line of the adjacent town of Revere, extending along the base of the conspicuous uplands of Brahmont, between Winthrop and Crescent Beach, is to be characterized for the same condition of things that has been found so deplorable in Winthrop. Revere possesses one of the finest stretches of ocean beach on the Atlantic coast. For the





11. GREAT HEAD, WINTHROP. After a photograph by N. L. Stebbins.

north shore it is what Nantasket is for the south shore. By nature it is an exceedingly attractive locality, and it is of immense value as a popular shore resort for the people of Boston and of the metropolitan district at large. It lies within twenty minutes of the business centre of Boston, by way of the ferry and steam cars of the Boston, Revere Beach & Lynn Railroad, and is also connected with the city by the eastern division of the Boston & Maine. The same steam railways, together with various street-railway lines, connect it with nearly all portions of the northerly half of the metropolitan district, making it the nearest ocean-side pleasure ground for a population numbering at least half a million.

Revere Beach, however, so far as environment is concerned, is to-day in a most deplorable condition. Nearly the whole shore is occupied for the space between the railway, the highways and the water, so far as the ocean billows permit, by the cheapest kind of shanties. These are utilized to a large extent for undesirable purposes. Rough and disorderly elements are thus attracted to the place, so that, except in a few favored spots, women and children cannot with security resort thither for the relaxation which they require. It hardly needs to be stated that this is an undesirable state of affairs for a place which may be said by natural right peculiarly to belong to the public for its own health and advantage.

Seaside recreation is one of the greatest charms and privileges of the summer months in any coast region, and it should be made as freely the prerogative of all as air, water and sunshine. For children, a day at the seaside is a day in paradise, spent as it is by digging in the sand, picking up shells and seaweeds, sporting in the water, and listening to the music of the waves. Something should be done, therefore, to make Revere Beach what it is capable of becoming for the great public. A seaside drive and promenade extending from the Boston connections that easily might be made at the southerly end of the beach, along to the Point of Pines and thence across the mouth of the Saugus River to a connection with the large urban population of Lynn, which

in a comparatively few years will number at least one hundred thousand, is a scheme that naturally presents itself as the simplest and most practical solution of the problem.

#### *10. The Lynn, Nahant and Swampscott Shores.*

At Lynn the enlightened policy adopted a few years ago by the authorities of that city in relation to recreation grounds has lately secured a most beautiful site upon the water front for an ocean-side terrace. This tract is in continuity with the long neck of Nahant, the ocean shore of which still bears the familiar designation of Lynn Beach. The latter, together with Little Nahant Beach, between the promontory of Little Nahant and the main peninsula, belongs to the town of Nahant. These two necks have the exceptional advantage of possessing double shore lines, the inner beaches bordering Boston bay and Lynn harbor. They are therefore capable of great public service for the large populations of the mainland near by. These double beaches are susceptible of some simple method of treatment that will greatly increase their value.

Beyond the ocean-side terrace of Lynn, just mentioned, is a stretch of alternating beach and rocky promontory, running along into Swampscott and capable of easy development as a noble esplanade. In Swampscott, adjacent to the Lynn boundary, is a fine stretch of beach at present largely occupied by fish houses and other unsightly constructions. A project is under consideration in Swampscott for reserving it for public purposes. In case this were done, and the policy that seems desirable in relation to Revere Beach were entered upon,—taken together with what Lynn and Nahant already hold,—a grand stretch of shore on the northerly side of Boston bay and a large portion of the peerless crescent of Nahant bay would become available for public use.

The continuous shore drive that in time would thus be secured would rival in its charms the noble Riverside drive of New York City; or the grand driveway along the lake shore now under construction and partly completed from the heart of Chicago out to Fort Sheridan, twenty miles away.



12. REVERE BEACH. After a photograph by N. L. Stebbins.



## III.

INLAND FEATURES OF THE NORTH AND WEST  
METROPOLITAN REGION.—LYNN WOODS.

The city of Lynn, in its noble public forest, “the Lynn Woods,” shows a remarkable instance of what public spirit and a wise policy of municipal foresight can accomplish. This great woodland reservation of more than two thousand acres serves the purpose of a grand public pleasure ground, incidentally to the protection of the water supply of the city. This consists of three beautiful basins occupying the sites of former swamps, and having shores largely of rock and covered with a forest growth. Throughout the woods are many scenes of rare sylvan beauty, and the territory is made conveniently and comfortably accessible to the public from nearly all parts by a system of drives and walks. The drives were constructed partly by the water board and partly by the park department, and the foot paths by the latter at a very slight expense. The Lynn woods furnish a telling example of what can be easily and economically accomplished in other parts of the metropolitan district, supplying most valuable recreation grounds of a character that can be maintained at the minimum of expense.

1. *The Saugus River Valley,—“Appleton’s Pulpit.”*

In the neighboring town of Saugus in the valley of the Saugus River are two localities of notable interest, both situated near the centre of the town. One of these is the locality about Pranker’s Pond,—a large basin formed in the river by the dam at Pranker’s Mills,—comprising the historic and picturesque feature called “Appleton’s Pulpit,” where, according to tradition, in the early days of the colony Major Appleton addressed the people from the summit of the rocky cliff, denouncing the tyranny of Andros. Below Pranker’s Mills the river meanders through tranquil meadows bordered by pastoral and wooded slopes, forming a quiet

rural landscape of exquisite beauty, — one of the most charming passages of the kind in the neighborhood of Boston.

It is well to bear in mind that this valley of the Saugus, with the spread of the population from the directions of both Lynn and Boston, will become, at no far distant day, filled by a large population. If either or both of these features can be secured, through private beneficence or local initiative, it would be desirable to include them in the metropolitan system. It is worthy of note that on the borders of the Saugus River just below Prank's Mills, and included within the second-mentioned feature, is the site of the first iron works established in this country, the ore coming from the bog near by. A large heap of slag still marks the spot.

### *2. Snake Creek Valley between Chelsea and Revere.*

On the borders of Chelsea and Revere is what is known as the Snake Creek Valley, between the two conspicuous eminences of drumlin formation, Powder-horn Hill on the Chelsea side and Feno's Hill on the Revere side. The salt creek winding through the marshes of the valley floor makes an attractive landscape feature, and the locality could readily be made available for recreative purposes, meeting the wants both of Chelsea, with its dense population, and Revere, which is the third community in the State in the percentage of increase for the decade recorded in the census of 1890. Its rate of growth was 150.5 per cent.; the population in 1880 was 2,263, and in 1890, 5,668.

### *3. The Valley of the Mystic River.*

The valley of the Mystic River next comes up for consideration. The Mystic is an estuary from the lower Mystic Lake, between Winchester, Medford and Arlington. It receives the flow of the chain of ponds and streams with their headwaters in Woburn, and proceeds through Horn Pond, in that city, Winter and Wedge ponds and the Abbajona River, in Winchester, down to the Mystic lakes,

the upper basin of which forms the water supply for the Charlestown district of Boston and the cities of Somerville, Everett and Chelsea. Tributaries of the Mystic are also the brooks from Spy Pond, in Arlington, and Fresh Pond, in Cambridge, and the Malden River, or the Wannalansett, as it is known in its upper portion, proceeding from Spot Pond in Stoneham and Medford and Ell Pond in Melrose. The shores of the Mystic estuary are largely salt marsh, and are little occupied except at two points : on the Charlestown side, where there are the extensive freight terminals of the Boston & Maine Railroad system ; and in its course through the centre of Medford, where up to within a little less than a generation were some of the most famous ship yards on the continent, and where the first vessel built in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, “The Blessing of the Bay,” was launched.

The beauty of the distant views makes the Mystic a very interesting stream. The shores being, for the most part, not easily accessible at present, the land is cheap, and consequently liable to occupancy of an undesirable character which might make the stream a great nuisance for the surrounding communities. Medford, in fact, has had very disagreeable experiences in this respect, owing to the pollution of the river by the tanning establishments and other manufactories in Woburn and Winchester.

The exercise of foresight in obtaining the margins of this stream might permanently establish the character of the surroundings for good, and furnish the residents of the adjacent communities with their most agreeable route to the sea.

#### *4. The Natural Park for Everett and Charlestown.*

Probably the most important feature of the lower Mystic River country, as offering great potentialities for recreative purposes, is the region of upland and marsh situated mostly within the limits of Everett, and of which the Van Voorhes farm forms the most conspicuous feature. A public reservation for recreative purposes at this place would be of great

value to the people of the Charlestown district of Boston just across the river, as well as to those of Everett and Chelsea, a portion of the marshy territory lying within the limits of the latter city, across the creek known as the Island End River, with which it might be connected by bridge. The national government has an extensive reservation of beautiful landscape character devoted to the use of its naval and marine hospitals on the borders of the Mystic in Chelsea. It is possible that the consent of the government might be obtained to the use of an esplanade along the river front of this territory, in which case the pleasure ground beyond would be accessible to the people of Chelsea and East Boston.

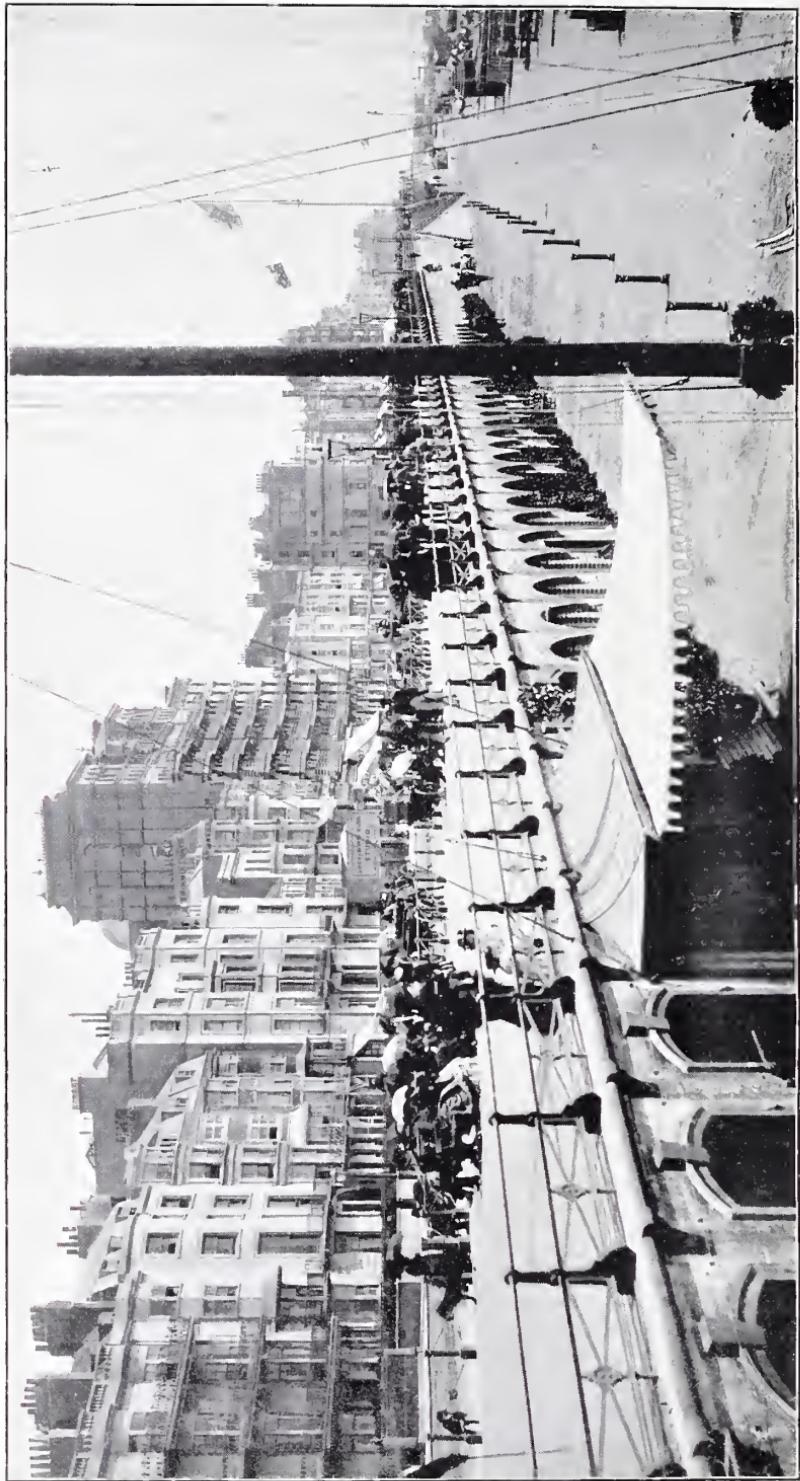
At present this may seem a little remote for the people of Everett, but it should be borne in mind that merely local open spaces of the playground type are not now under consideration. Its comparative inaccessibility probably accounts for the fact that it has not been covered with dwellings long since, like the most of the surface in that city of remarkable growth, the first community in the State in its percentage of increase according to the census of 1890,— 166.1 per cent. ; population, 4,159 in 1880, 11,068 in 1890.

This is the most beautiful landscape feature within the limits of Everett, and is capable of becoming a most precious possession ; for it is so situated that the prevailing winds of the summer sweep thither across a broad stretch of water, over which they would come laden with refreshing coolness. Such a locality should be considered, not from the point of view of its present relation to the neighboring populations, but for what it may become. And the map will show that it could be easily connected by pleasant routes with the centre of Everett's population, and brought within a really short distance thereof.

##### 5. *The Upper Mystic: Mystic Lakes, Woburn and Winchester.*

Another most attractive landscape portion of the Mystic valley is the neighborhood of the Mystic lakes, now chiefly





13. THE SEA-FRONT AT BRAMPTON, ENGLAND.

occupied by large residence estates, which the pressure of population must sooner or later force to be cut up into suburban lots. A policy that would secure the shores of these lakes to public use, with roads and walks brought as near the water as practicable and the intervening lots reserved to the public, would secure development of the surrounding territory in a way that would make it of permanent attractiveness.

The upper valley of the Mystic, from Horn Pond down to the upper Mystic Lake, presents a complicated problem by reason of the miscellaneous character of its occupancy, which has, to a great extent, defaced the natural beauty of a landscape originally remarkably fine. In spots much of this remains, as in portions of Winter and Wedge ponds in Winchester, and particularly the banks of the Abbajona near the stately town hall and the picturesque little Episcopal chapel of that place.

The town of Winchester has lately taken measures looking towards dealing with this problem comprehensively. Possibly its solution may not be so difficult as on the face it appears. At all events, it cannot be of so costly a character as that which Boston and Brookline have had to contend with in the reclamation of the Muddy River valley.

#### *6. The Middlesex Fells.*

One of the most celebrated tracts under consideration is the wild, rocky and woodland region known as “the Middlesex Fells,” situated in the cities of Medford and Malden, and the towns of Melrose, Stoneham and Winchester. This territory has been more prominently brought to public attention as a place demanding reservation for the use of the people than any other landscape feature in the metropolitan district. The efforts of the late Elizur Wright were for many years untiringly directed in behalf of this beneficent project. His home in Medford lay on the verge of the Fells at the foot of Pine Hill, an eminence of noble contour on the southerly margin of the territory. His children have devoted

themselves to realizing what was probably the most ardent desire of his declining years, and Miss Ellen Wright and Mr. Walter C. Wright propose, in case the conversion of the Fells into a public domain is brought about, to give two of the finest woodland and hilltop tracts in the territory, amounting to something like forty acres.

The Fells forms a region of great natural beauty, which has long served as a recreation ground for the large population in its immediate neighborhood, — already numbering nearly one hundred thousand, — while it is a favorite resort for excursionists from Boston, Cambridge and other localities farther removed. Population is now pressing against its borders so closely that the problem may well be termed urgent, and it is made the more so by the fact that the cheapness of land in various portions has induced a tendency to occupy it with a correspondingly cheap class of buildings.

The extremely rocky and broken character of the greater part of the territory makes it unsuitable for occupation for residence purposes, except at a very great outlay for the construction of streets and for other preparations. Therefore its occupation in the way mentioned promises at no distant day to present for the surrounding communities a problem which will be costly to deal with. Important features of this region are Spot Pond, which furnishes a water supply for the cities of Malden and Medford and the town of Melrose, and the two beautiful reservoirs of irregular outline that supply the town of Winchester. These cities and towns have, for the protection and increase of their water supplies, taken a large portion of the territory. In addition, the town of Stoneham has recently taken Bear Hill, the highest eminence in the Fells, together with neighboring land, for park purposes. And bordering the Ravine Road to the eastward of Spot Pond, the beautiful tract of woodland called "the Virginia wood" has lately been presented to the trustees of public reservations. Through these various instrumentalities, therefore, something like sixteen hundred acres of land and water in the Fells have become public property.

To unite the scattered portions and obtain their most desirable features would require the taking of from one thousand to fifteen hundred acres in addition. Therefore the magnitude of the undertaking is fortunately not so great, and the problem itself not so difficult to solve, as it appeared to be ten years ago. The main consideration that now presents itself is to secure the needed lands before it becomes too late.

In the neighborhood of the Fells, lying in Malden and Melrose, is a beautiful private park known as Pine Banks, laid out by the Hon. E. S. Converse of Malden, and a favorite resort for the neighboring populations. The street cars, passing close by, bring excursionists from as far away as Chelsea and Boston.

#### *7. The Waverley Oaks.*

Between the town of Belmont and the city of Waltham lie the celebrated Waverley oaks. They are mostly within the limits of the latter municipality, and occupy a park-like pastoral region of extraordinary beauty, the oaks forming what is regarded by the best authorities as the finest group of those trees in New England.

The little stream now commonly known as "Clematis Brook," but which the poet Lowell celebrated as "Beaver Brook" in one of his most beautiful lyrics, runs through the Fells. The cascade that formed the subject of Lowell's poem lies a short distance up the stream near the oaks. The stream, the falls, the trees and the noble contour of the landscape, together with the fact that the place lies in the immediate neighborhood of a rapidly growing population, with the city of Waltham not far away, and Boston, Cambridge and Somerville accessible by rail, make it extremely desirable that this spot should be secured for the public.

#### *8. Prospect Hill.*

In Waltham, to the north-westward of the centre of the city's population, lies the noble eminence of Prospect Hill,

the greatest elevation in the neighborhood of Boston after the Blue Hills. Very fortunately it appears that the park commission of Waltham, lately constituted, promises to attend to the reservation of this very desirable feature, leaving as a subject for metropolitan consideration the immensely important matter of the Charles River, in which Waltham is naturally deeply concerned.

## IV.

### THE CHARLES RIVER.

The question of the proper treatment of the Charles River so as best to serve the interests of the entire community is a problem of the greatest importance, involving matters both of recreation and of grave sanitary import. The river, for a large part of its course, flows through the centre of the population of the metropolitan district. The question of how to protect it from pollution has lately come to the front. In its lower reaches, particularly, the unsanitary condition of its flats and its shores has made it a serious nuisance to the inhabitants of the neighboring cities and towns.

The portion of the stream that chiefly concerns the metropolitan district is that flowing between the town of Dedham and the lowest bridge that crosses it between Boston and the Charlestown district. The river in this portion of its course is very tortuous. The cities of Boston, Newton, Waltham, Cambridge and Somerville, and the towns of Dedham, Needham, Wellesley, Weston and Watertown, border upon it. It forms the south-westerly boundary of Boston, between the West Roxbury district, Dedham and Needham. It bounds the city of Newton for the greater part of the way on three sides, and flows through the heart of the most populous section of the city of Waltham.





14. BEAVER BROOK OAKS, WAVERLEY. After a photograph by Henry Brooks.

*1. Pollution of the Stream.*

The sewage of the cities of Cambridge and a portion of Somerville and of a greater part of the Charlestown district of Boston, together with a portion of the Back Bay and Brighton districts, now flows into the river, and the sedimentary deposit thus left upon the flats causes most offensive nuisances all the way from Watertown along the tidal portion of the stream down to deep water.

It should be remembered, however, that the getting rid of this, the most serious element in the river's contamination, is a question of but a very short time; for, on the completion of the Metropolitan sewerage system, now well under way, all this sewage will be carried out to deep water, far out in the bay, leaving the tidal flow in the river free from further danger of pollution. Along here, therefore, there would only be the deposits already existing upon the flats and banks to be looked after, together with the pollution that comes from further up the stream. As Newton, Waltham and Watertown are also to be taken care of by the Metropolitan sewerage system, the contamination of the fresh-water portion of the stream from those communities will be avoided. There remains, however, the pollution from factories and other sources from the various communities bordering the river from Milford down. These, while perhaps still serious, are relatively slight in comparison with the contamination whose prevention is already assured, and can therefore be taken care of with correspondingly slight difficulty.

*2. The Menace of Malaria.*

But, with all these sources of contamination eliminated, there yet remains one of the greatest menaces to public health, and that is the malarial troubles which have arisen in the valley of the river within the past decade.

Malaria was previously unknown in this portion of New

England, but the trouble has been gradually creeping this way from the westward and southward, until its germs now appear to be well established in various sections of the country around Boston, particularly in the valley of the Charles River, where it is recognized as one of the most serious of evils. It hardly need be said that too decisive and radical measures cannot be taken to remove this danger, which, if allowed to establish itself permanently, will prove a fearful detriment to the various cities and towns which it afflicts, the possible damage from which is beyond estimate.

It is evident, therefore, that the earliest precautions are needed to guard against this danger. While the causes of malarial disease do not yet appear to be definitely known, it seems to be pretty generally agreed that a main source of the trouble lies in improperly drained soils, and that the germs of the malady originate in the low and damp lands of river borders and swamps, whence they are carried by prevailing winds to neighboring uplands, where, although the immediate conditions of the soil may be sanitary, the residents appear to suffer to the greatest extent. The changes of a season in the level of bodies of fresh water, the exposure of flats and swamps covered at higher stages to the sun and warm winds of summer, and the consequent decay of vegetable matter, are believed to aggravate, if not cause, the malady.

Merely keeping the pollution out of a stream, therefore, does not reach the seat of this most serious trouble. The banks of the stream must be brought completely under public control, for only in this way can their sanitary character be properly assured. For instance, growing vegetation, and particularly a tree covering, is believed to do much towards diminishing malarial infection through the offices which vegetable growth performs in eliminating noxious elements from the soil and water. Such a growth can best be assured only by the comprehensive and well-considered methods of treatment which are possible only under a public ownership, and to this end the entire banks of a stream ought to be in the charge of one central authority.





15. CHARLES RIVER AT RIVERSIDE STATION.

*3. Recreative Value of the River.*

The recreative value of a river like the Charles is also a matter of great importance to a large community like that inhabiting the metropolitan district. The stretch of the river, for instance, between Riverside station in Newton and the city of Waltham, is one of the great metropolitan pleasure grounds of Boston. Something over eight hundred pleasure craft of various kinds are kept on this section of the Charles alone. It is frequented by thousands throughout the summer for rowing, canoeing and other forms of aquatic recreation, and it presents one of the most beautiful and attractive sights in the country, with its irregular shores covered for the most part with trees and shrubbery, varied at intervals by lawns and handsome houses and long, calm reaches of water, now spread out into lake-like expanses and now contracted into narrow channels, covered with hundreds of canoes and other craft gliding swiftly up and down the stream.

The extent to which water recreation of this character serves a great metropolitan population is exemplified by the use made of the Thames above London, where there are thousands of licensed pleasure craft of various kinds; and the most convenient means of passing up and down stream are provided in the way of locks and "run-ways," the latter enabling an ordinary boat to be carried to a different level with a delay of only a minute or so. An accompanying illustration (Plate 18) shows one of these "run-ways." It will be observed that it is provided with rollers to facilitate the easy carrying of boats between different levels of the river. At the top of the ways is a sort of "teeter-board," so that the boat will not be strained on making the change of inclination. It is evident that the adoption of a device of this sort on the streams near Boston would immensely increase their recreative use and value.

The Charles River is capable of similar utilization throughout its metropolitan course, and it thus would not only greatly promote the welfare of the people by affording one

of the most healthful means of recreation, but the attractiveness of the stream would also add enormously to the value of the surrounding land. For the proper conservation of a stream having the character of the Charles, the amount of land necessary to be taken would be governed by local circumstances, more being required in one place and less in another. Any one familiar with what has been done by German communities along the banks of their rivers in the beautiful *Anlagen*, almost universally existing in such localities in that country, will see that at many places all that is needed to meet the purpose is to secure a strip of but a few rods in width along the banks, providing perhaps no more than a footway, and creating a feature of remarkable beauty at slight expense. The interference with present occupancy of the banks, where such occupancy is of an inoffensive nature, need for the most part be but very slight. But the main thing is to assure the permanent good character of such occupancy; and the passing of a strip of the shore into the hands of the public will prove a benefit not only to the community in general, but also to the abutters in particular, saving them from the danger of the intrusion of undesirable features into their neighborhood, and the destruction of present elements of marked attractiveness. Above all, where there exists what is practically a great public recreation ground like that stretch of the river between Riverside and Waltham, it is of the greatest importance to assure permanently the most favorable conditions for its enjoyment; the present beauty of the landscape free from the danger of injury, and opportunity provided to improve the sanitary character of the stream and its shores. There have already been causes for grave apprehension in the latter respect. It is a matter of paramount importance that the enjoyment of the river by the multitudes that resort here should be truly recreative, and not permitted to become a menace to public health.

*4. Utilitarian Ends best served by Recreative Means.*

Although the problem presented by the Charles River is therefore primarily of a sanitary nature, it does not follow that a purely utilitarian method of treatment is in any respect the one best adapted to reach the ends desired. We have seen how important it is that the banks should be secured, in order fully to control the stream and conserve it in the best possible manner. As in the case of the great improvement with which Boston began its new park system, it appears that the cheapest and most efficient way to remedy the evils complained of is to adapt the stream to a utilization for recreative purposes in the best possible way.

This course was adopted by Boston in its handling of the Stony Brook drainage problem ; and in the same way another sanitary problem, that of the Muddy River valley between Brookline and Boston, was dealt with jointly by these two communities. Both of these were, first of all, engineering questions, but, had they been treated merely as such, — that is, had the waters of those streams been conducted away in sewers or canals, — the expense would have been much greater than it has been, while the solution would have been exceedingly unsatisfactory. The cheapest way turned out to be the most beautiful way : the development of the valleys of these streams, so far as they were to be dealt with in their respective regions, for recreative purposes. By making them the basis for a grand parkway, they were also made to serve the enjoyment of the public, the water being conducted in open winding channels, simulating the course of a natural stream, while low marshy basins were provided for the overflow to which Stony Brook was at times subject, much to the damage of the surrounding territory.

So it happened that while this improvement fulfilled the demands for more efficient drainage in the best possible way, it contributed greatly to the enjoyment and convenience of the public by giving an agreeable approach to the outlying parks of the new system ; while the landscape character of the territory, having been made permanently beautiful, has

added enormously to the value of real estate throughout the entire neighborhood. This indicates the proper course to be pursued in relation to the Charles River.

### 5. *Present Conditions of the River.*

An examination of that portion of the river comprising its tidal reaches, lying between the lower bridges and the dam at Watertown, exhibits at first sight what appears to be a pretty discouraging state of affairs. The steadily increasing pollution of the stream has made it an obnoxious feature of the adjacent communities, and in the treatment it has lately received there is manifest the contempt or dislike generated by such a condition of things, very different from the respect shown for the stream in the earlier days, when it was a main channel of intercourse.

One observes all sorts of ugly growths and developments upon the shores. Land has been cheapened in consequence of the nuisances arising from the river, and therefore it has been occupied in many places by various industrial establishments, drawn thither not because of the convenience of water transportation, but in consequence of the low prices at which locations could be obtained. From Boston to Watertown all sorts of ugly outbuildings, shanties, rubbish heaps, etc., disfigure the banks. Here and there are evidences of the great attractiveness formerly possessed by the stream. For instance, in Cambridge, close by a stoneyard located on the shore for the reasons aforementioned, may be seen the rather forlorn remnants of what must once have been a very charming bit of natural scenery, with some of the wild growth still remaining, while the neighborhood is shown, by the character of the houses, to have been until recently a first-class residence section.

At the other end of the estuary in Watertown is what was once a noble country seat with extensive grounds terraced up from the river to the house, a large and stately mansion built to face the stream, showing the respect in which the river was held in the earlier half of the present





16. CHARLES RIVER IN NEWTON AND WESTON. After a photograph by Charles Wells Hubbard.

century, when this place was laid out. At present the tendency in that neighborhood is to avoid the river as one of the most undesirable characteristics of the town.

To restore the old state of things and improve upon them should be the aim in whatever is done towards settling the problem now presented by the stream. This is a task not so gigantic or difficult as it at first appears, in view of the unpleasant character which the banks of the Charles now bear. The excrescences and scars that at present so mar the landscape are, happily, matters that could be easily removed at a relatively slight expense, and the task of restoring the beauty of the shores along those portions of the stream that lie beyond the points where the strictly urban nature of its surroundings gives way to a suburban and rural aspect need not be an exceedingly expensive one.

In the lower portion of the river, along the broad basin between Boston and Cambridge, the capabilities of the stream are now well appreciated, and undertakings already in hand, or projected, will take care of most of that part of the Charles.

#### *6. Existing Public Holdings bordering the Charles.*

An inquiry into the amount of public and quasi-public holdings along the Charles throughout its metropolitan course shows them to be more numerous and extensive than has been supposed. Their existence consequently diminishes by so much the magnitude of the problem.

We have, for instance, on the Boston side, the Charles-bank, already created between the Craigie and the West Boston bridges, while it is proposed to extend the embankment along the entire Boston shore up to the point where the Bay State road has been laid out by the board of survey along the margin of the river.

On the Cambridge side the Charles River Embankment Company is taking care of a considerable stretch of territory both above and below the Harvard bridge, and developing it for first-class residence purposes, with an esplanade two

hundred feet wide along the sea-wall now under construction. Further up on the Cambridge side we have the Longfellow Memorial Garden, the public landing near Mount Auburn, and then the two cemeteries.

In Watertown there are the extensive arsenal grounds of the national government, bordering the river for a long distance, and on the opposite side of the stream, near the dam, the town owns a considerable stretch where the ancient public landing and fishery rights were located. Again, on the Boston side in Brighton, there is "the Soldiers Field," lately presented to Harvard University by Henry Lee Higginson, and adjoining is an extensive tract of marsh land also belonging to the University.

Along the fresh-water course of the stream, in Waltham, that city owns a considerable area around the pumping station of the water works near Mount Feake; near by is the Mount Feake cemetery.

From a short distance above Newton Lower Falls up into Dedham, in Newton, Needham, Dedham and Boston, the city of Newton and the town of Brookline have taken nearly the entire territory bordering the stream on both sides for the protection of their water supply. Newton alone holds something over nine hundred acres, comprising the large extent of upland on the Needham side, as well as the meadows bordering the river. Then in the Boston city limits, in the West Roxbury district, opposite Dedham, Boston has taken something like twenty-five acres as a site for its new parental school. The existence of these extensive reservations simplifies the problem to a considerable extent.

#### 7. *The Hemlock Gorge at Echo Bridge.*

One of the most beautiful landscape features in the neighborhood of Boston, and something unique in its way, is the spot in the neighborhood of the bridge carrying the Sudbury aqueduct of the Boston water system across the Charles, widely known as "Echo Bridge," and so called on account of its wonderful echoes. This is the wild and romantic

“Hemlock Gorge,” where the stream retains much of its primitive aspect, with steep banks of conglomerate rock, clothed for the most part with a magnificent growth of hemlock, the whole forming an extraordinarily beautiful landscape feature which should be preserved intact for the enjoyment of the public forever.

## V.

### FEATURES OF THE SOUTH METROPOLITAN REGION.—THE NEPONSET RIVER.

Another element of importance in the water courses of the metropolitan district is the Neponset River. That portion of the stream which immediately concerns the work of the commission lies between the village of Readville, in the town of Hyde Park, and the sea. The river flows through the centre of population in Hyde Park, where it receives, through the largely artificial water way known as Mother Brook, a great portion of the waters of the Charles. Then, first forming the boundary between Hyde Park and Milton and afterwards the line between the Dorchester district of Boston on one side and Milton and Quincy on the other, it reaches Dorchester Bay between Commercial Point and Squantum.

As far down as the Lower Mills its waters are fresh, and beyond that it is an estuary, bringing the head of navigation to a point directly below the dam.

It is a stream with a decided character of its own. Its fall from Hyde Park to the sea-level is comparatively abrupt, so that it is broken at frequent intervals in its course by a series of dams, giving water power to various factories. On either side the highways pass not far from its banks, approaching them very closely in places. Its shores are well clothed with trees and shrubbery, and present many picturesque passages. The lower reaches of the stream, with its expanse of bordering marshes and abrupt uplands, present views of exceeding attractiveness. One of the most

notable landscapes in New England is that looking down the Neponset valley from Milton Hill, commanding a view of the entire course of the stream until it merges in the bay.

The work of the Boston board of survey on the left bank of the Neponset has considerably simplified the problem of its preservation for the purposes under consideration. The board of survey, in its system of highways designed for this district, has laid out a broad riverside drive following very nearly the course of the stream from Neponset village, near its mouth, nearly to the Lower Mills, and it would be a matter of slight expense to take the land intervening between this road and the water.

As the marshes on the Quincy and Milton side, with their adjacent uplands, form a most important landscape element and contribute immensely to the attractiveness of the neighborhood as one of the most desirable places of residence in the vicinity of Boston, it is not too much to expect that local co-operation may be looked for in securing the permanent preservation of these elements of natural scenery. From the nature of the shore and the character of the communities more immediately interested, it should be a matter attended by no great difficulty to bring about the improvement of the stream in a manner worthy of its location and of its natural advantages.

### *1. The Muddy Pond Woods in West Roxbury and Hyde Park.*

The attention of the commissioners was early called to a tract of striking natural beauty, lying partly in the West Roxbury district of Boston and partly within the limits of Hyde Park. This tract is locally known as the Muddy Pond woods, from the small pond in which Stony Brook, that troublesome and costly stream, has its source. This pond makes a pretty tarn, enclosed by erags and woods that form a wild and rocky wilderness. Some of the trees are of recent growth and others are magnificent old pines,



17. BOATING ON THE THAMES, NEAR LONDON, ENGLAND.



through which run roads of remarkable beauty. The notable landscape feature of this territory lies in the various vistas of the mountain-like Blue Hills, not far away across the Neponset valley, seen in a framework of wholly sylvan surroundings.

As the important community of Hyde Park is close by, and a large population promises to grow up on the Boston side, this territory, as a pleasure ground of the public-forest type, would be of great value to both communities. It is worthy of note that it is enclosed by the Dedham and Readville branches and the main line of the Providence division of the Old Colony Railroad.

Bellevue Hill, the highest point of land within the limits of Boston, with its conspicuous water tower, from the summit of which glorious views in every direction are obtained, is very near this territory, and the character of the hill is such that a larger area should be reserved for public use about the tower. A parkway connecting the present Boston park system with a public forest in this place, running from the Arnold Arboretum through West Roxbury by the way of Bellevue Hill, would probably be of much value in providing the pleasantest approach possible, and at the same time opening up in the most attractive manner a large extent of territory at present but sparsely occupied.

## *2. In West Roxbury and Brookline.*

In the sparsely inhabited region of West Roxbury and Brookline, in the neighborhood of the Allandale Spring and the Walnut Hills cemetery, is a very beautiful rolling and park-like country, portions of which might, with advantage, be reserved for recreative purposes. At present the lack of transportation facilities keeps that portion of the country unoccupied, but as population grows in that direction attention will probably be called more closely to the desirability of providing an open space there, of the character which the beauty of the landscape invites.

*3. The Blue Hill Range.*

It remains to refer to what must prove one of the valuable features in any metropolitan park system: the noble range of the Blue Hills. These hills are the most conspicuous elevations in this part of Massachusetts, and present a type of scenery which, although the highest summit of the range is but six hundred and thirty-five feet above the sea level, is of really mountain-like character. As they are seen with their bases almost at the level of the sea, their height counts for its full value. The hills are of grand outline, and the region is almost as much of a wilderness to-day as it was when they gave the name to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. For Massachusetts means "the place of the great hills," and this range was the landmark that for the aborigines distinguished the bay above the other inlets of the coast.

An examination shows that it would be feasible, at a moderate expense, to form a reservation here that should include practically the entire range, which is contained, for the most part, within the limits of Milton, Canton, Quincy and Braintree, together with the almost unoccupied country to the southward, with several of the ponds that form so attractive a feature of the landscape from the hilltops. This region to the southward is of particular value for the purpose of a water supply for Quincy, Braintree and other communities in that direction.

While almost uninhabited, this southerly slope, from its nearness to Boston and the cheapness of its land, is liable to abuse, as instanced in the various nuisances in the shape of piggeries that have been established throughout the woods, which have proved a source of great vexation to the people of Quincy. Even though it might not be shown that these nuisances caused pollution, the idea of the existence of such things in the region whence a community's supply of water is drawn is certainly not agreeable.

An element of abiding value in a reservation of this character, with its pure, mountain-like air, such as may be breathed several hundred feet above the sea level,

lies in the opportunities presented for people to resort thither, and derive corresponding sanitary benefits of a kind which otherwise might necessitate distant journeys. The peculiar character of this region is described in an article reprinted from "Garden and Forest," which I append to this statement. [See Appendix F.]

## VI.

### LAKES AND PONDS OF THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT.

The various lakes and ponds that abound throughout the metropolitan district form features worthy of special mention. It seems strange how completely these most charming features of the landscape, as well as the streams, bringing as they do the element of water into the scene, have been neglected by the communities that possess them.

A notable instance of the value which such bodies of water have for a community, and at the same time of the inconvenience arising through neglect to secure their margins for the use of the public, was presented at the time of the "water carnival" which took place in Waltham on the evening of Sept. 17, 1891. This was really an enchanting spectacle, and it attracted many thousands of visitors from Boston and the surrounding communities. But so great was the crowd, that, in the centre of the city where the shores are mostly occupied by dwellings—which, as usual, turn their backs upon the stream, showing how little its value has been appreciated—many hundreds of visitors were able to see but little if anything of the spectacle, for lack of room.

In like manner the Mystic River courses through Medford in the same neglected way, and the Neponset through Hyde Park.

#### 1. *The Example set by Wakefield at Lake Quannapowitt.*

In the matter of ponds, Lake Quannapowitt, in Wakefield, presented the first, and until very recently, the only instance where the possibilities of such a body of water as a scene of

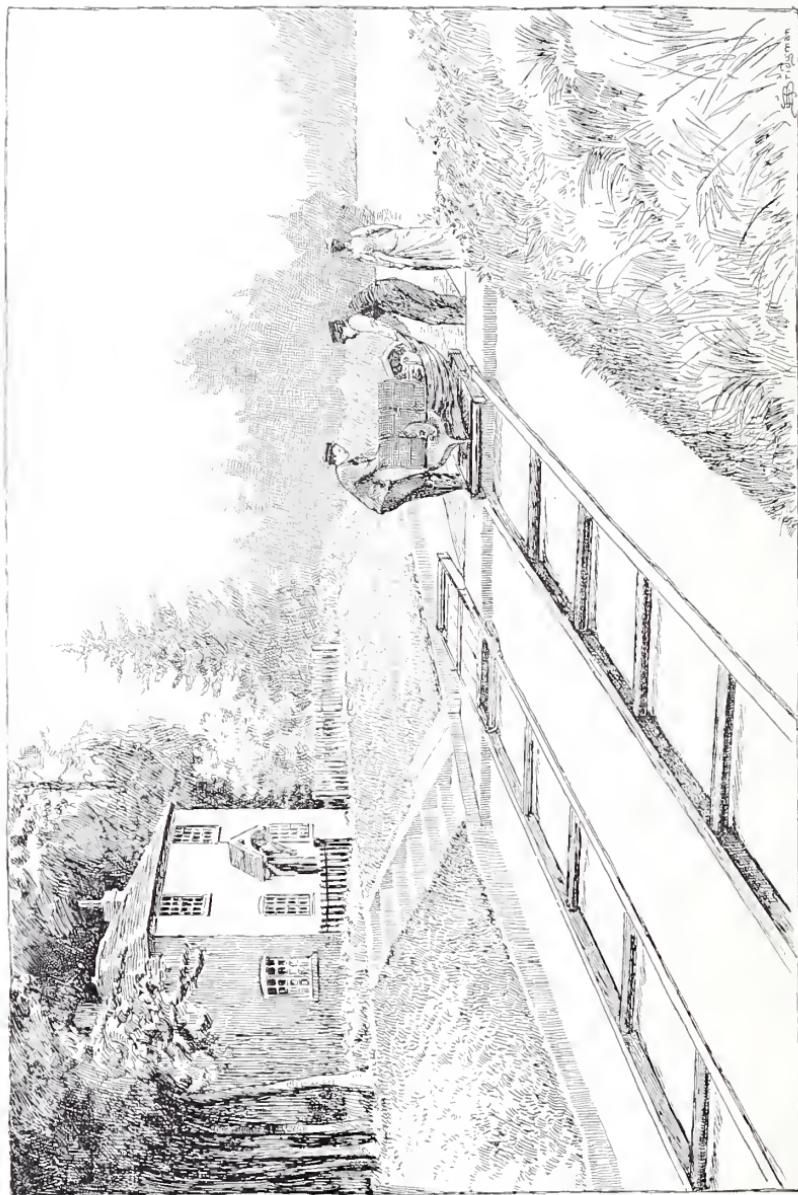
public recreation, and in giving a vastly increased attractiveness to a community, have been taken advantage of in the neighborhood of Boston. Upon the shores of this lake, close to the centre of population, an extensive public ground has been laid out, while the main county highway, as it runs beside the water, is thereby made a most charming drive, with the strip of land along the shore cared for by the town. It may here be said that it would be worth while to continue the work thus begun by treating the westerly side of the pond in the same way, and by so doing secure the permanent preservation of its entire shores in a beautiful and natural manner. Wakefield here offers an example which other communities might follow with profit, and their leading citizens could do nothing better than to visit that town to see what has been done there.

## 2. *Jamaica Pond and Other Lakes.*

Boston has now begun to improve the opportunity afforded by Jamaica Pond, the largest sheet of fresh water within the city limits, and that lake is to be made the finest feature of the city's grand parkway. Several other lakes and water basins have been taken advantage of in a somewhat similar way, through their connection with the water supplies of various communities. For instance, Fresh Pond in Cambridge, the Chestnut Hill reservoir of Boston, and the several basins of the Lynn water supply in the Lynn woods, may be mentioned.

But it is time that steps were taken for preserving the borders of all the ponds within the metropolitan district, thus making them permanently of service in the reereation of the neighboring communities. Only in this way can they be prevented from becoming serious nuisances by the growth of thickly settled population around them, instead of remaining the most charming features of the landscape that they naturally are. Speciially worthy of mention in this connection are Sluice and Flax ponds, in Lynn; L and Swain's





18. A RUN-WAY ON THE THAMES. Drawn by Lewis J. Bridgman, after a photograph by F. L. Olmsted, Jr.

ponds, in Melrose; Winter and Wedge ponds, in Winchester; Spy Pond, in Arlington; and Hammond's Pond, in Newton.

3. *Horn Pond in Woburn.*

Horn Pond, in Woburn, deserves special comment from the fact that it lies close to the centre of that city's population, and is the source of the local water supply as well as an extraordinarily beautiful feature of a very attractive landscape. The fact that highways run near the margin on two sides, while on the other sides the land is apparently of no great value, should render the proper treatment of this lake something easily carried out. The water supply of Woburn is drawn from this pond by a filtering gallery, but should the pollution of the pond, already considerable, become serious, this filtering process might become inadequate, and the city consequently subject to a great loss. It is therefore extremely desirable that something should be done here.

## PART THIRD.

## I.

## SPECIAL PLEASURE-WAYS, OR ROADS FOR LIGHT TRAFFIC.

The question of making these various reservations that have been under consideration conveniently accessible, not only from the great centre of population in Boston but from the various other communities forming the metropolitan district, is a matter of exceeding importance. The various steam-railway lines approach very near to nearly all of the localities whose reservation has been recommended or suggested, and the street-railway lines also perform a similar service. The rapid extension and multiplication of the latter, however, covering the metropolitan district in all directions, while it greatly promotes public convenience on the whole, also complicates the problem of communication very materially. It is important not only that these reservations should have provided pleasant and safe means of access for driving, riding, bicycling, etc., but also that the matter of intercommunicating roads between the communities themselves should be similarly looked out for.

*1. Occupation of Highways by Street Railways.*

The manner, however, in which street railways have for the most part been laid out has very materially interfered with the original and normal use of the highways. These are now cut up by either single or double lines of street-railway tracks, over which heavy electric cars rush at frequent intervals. The ordinary traffic is thus forced into comparatively narrow limits. In consequence, the road-bed

is badly cut up into ruts, etc., and made uncomfortable and unsafe for its legitimate purposes. Women and children can no longer drive without danger over most of the roads in the neighborhood of Boston, as they could up to within a few years.

The question of providing a special system of roads from which street-railway lines should either be excluded, or assigned special reservations separating them entirely from the ordinary highway traffic, after the style of the Beacon Street boulevard in Brookline, is a question that presents itself as one of the important metropolitan problems awaiting solution in the near future. It would seem that there should be a special system of roads upon which all heavy traffic should be forbidden, and their use confined to light vehicles and pleasure driving. Roads restricted in this way, when once properly constructed, not being subject to the extraordinary wear and tear of heavy traffic, are easily kept in good condition at relatively light expense, and are therefore more economically maintained than roads to which all kinds of traffic are admitted. They also have the great advantage of being attractive for the best class of residents, and they correspondingly increase the taxable value of property in their neighborhoods.

## *2. The Illinois Boulevard Law.*

The example offered by the city of Chicago in its magnificent system of boulevards, one of the most popular and celebrated features of that city, is instructive. These boulevards have been laid out and constructed under the general law of the State, commonly known as "the Illinois boulevard act." This act provides that, upon the consent of the municipal authorities having control of streets or parts thereof leading to any public park, and also the consent in writing of the owners of a majority of the frontage of the lots and lands abutting on such streets, so far as proposed to be taken, the park commissioners shall have power to connect any public park, boulevards or drive-

way under their control with any part of a city, town or village, by taking such streets. It is conditional that such connection or improvement shall embrace only such street or streets as are necessary to form one continuous improvement.

A similar law in this State would not only tend to make public pleasure grounds more accessible, and therefore of greater use and convenience to the people, but would furnish the means for effecting a very desirable improvement in our highways.

A consideration of the present situation in the surroundings of Boston will show how very unevenly distributed are the advantages in this respect. The city itself, and the suburbs to the southward and westward, are either very well provided with agreeable means of connection with the urban portions and the rural regions beyond, or projects have been decided upon which will soon provide such facilities.

For instance, the people of Boston, by the way of Commonwealth Avenue, including its extension to the Chestnut Hill reservoir, and the Beacon Street boulevard terminating at the same place, have a means of getting from almost the heart of the city far out of town by broad, thoroughly constructed and beautifully situated avenues. Beside this, the grand parkway will soon connect nearly all of the main features of the city's new park system with each other and with the heart of the city. The Marine Park, at City Point, will also be similarly connected by the shore drive along Old Harbor and the parkway which joins at two places the great cross-town thoroughfare of East and West Chester "Park," as it is most inaptly called.

By such a law as that of Illinois, suitable streets in the city proper could be transferred to the care of the park commission, and thereby made very desirable for residence purposes; at the same time reducing the cost of maintenance very materially, while pleasant means of getting out of town might be provided in every section of the city. The carrying out of a boulevard improvement on Blue Hill Avenue of a character similar to that of Beacon Street in Brookline





19. HEMLOCK GORGE, CHARLES RIVER, NEWTON UPPER FALLS. After a photograph by Francis W. Morandi.

promises to eonnect the city, by way of Franklin Park, with the Blue Hills by a beautiful driveway, thus making very aecessible the publie reservation recommended in that locality. The parkway suggested from the Arnold Arboretum by the way of Bellevue Hill to the Muddy Pond woods would perform a similar serviee for that seetion.

*3. A Deficiency of Good and Pleasant Roads connecting with Boston from the Northward.*

When we turn to the region north of the Charles, we find a deplorable defieieney in respeet to pleasant and convenient means of eonnection between the suburban eommunities and the city proper. There is at present absolutely no such connection, unless we may except the approach, by the way of some of the less frequeted streets in Cambridge, from Harvard Square and the region beyond to the westward and northward, and the Harvard bridge. No clearly defined route, however, exists even here. As for the rest, the northerly suburbs are almost absolutely cut off from any agreeable approaeh to the city proper. For instance, the two bridges aeross the Charles River to Charlestown, and the Chelsea, Malden and Middlesex bridges across the Mystie, together with the approaches by way of Medford, form praeitically the only direet routes to the eity proper from any portion of the metropolitan district between Lynn and Winehester. This is to-day the most rapidly growing seetion of the distriet, and it hardly need be said that it is detrimental, both to the interests of Boston itself and of these northerly eommunities, whieh include some of the most attractive natural features in the surroundings, thus to be cut off from all pleasant means of approach.

The suggested pleasure drive down the Mystie valley, joining the Chelsea bridge at the Naval Hospital grounds, would go far towards providing one of the attractive approaches needed for this seetion; for Chelsea bridge will soon have to be made a high-level struture, in order to avoid the crossing of the numerous tracks of the Boston & Maine Railroad's extensive terminals on the Mystie. Some

more agreeable way, however, of getting across Charlestown would still have to be devised. Possibly the privilege of a driveway inside of the Navy Yard wall, for light traffic, might be secured from the national government. Then there would only remain the short section between the Navy Yard and the heart of the city to be taken care of, and this might be accomplished by some such separation of the street traffic of Boston according to requirements for heavy commercial teaming and light vehicles as has been discussed by the Rapid Transit Commission.

A new boulevard or parkway, connecting the Middlesex Fells with the city proper, either by taking advantage of existing streets or laying out, for a great extent across unoccupied land, an entirely new thoroughfare, would be very desirable. Some way of crossing Somerville and Cambridge to the Harvard bridge and the Back Bay section of Boston, as well as with the grand parkway to the city's main park system beyond, could probably be devised in this connection. Such an approach to the city would be of immense value to communities like Malden, Melrose, Medford, Stoneham, Winchester, Woburn and Wakefield, while by joining it with a parkway down the Mystic valley, such as has been suggested, it would also be of service to Everett, Chelsea and the communities beyond.

Still another important pleasure route might be devised, connecting East Boston by the way of Wood Island Park, Orient Heights and Beachmont with Revere Beach, and thus giving a beautiful approach to Lynn, Swampscott, Nahant and other communities along the north shore.

#### *4. A General Parkway Law recommended.*

The creation of a system of parkways or boulevards, such as has here been suggested, would be greatly facilitated by the passage of such a law as that which has been so serviceable in Illinois. I accordingly submit herewith, for the consideration of the commissioners, a draft of a bill based on the Illinois law, making its chief provisions applicable not only in the proposed metropolitan district but throughout the State. [See Appendix B.]





20. THE BLUE HILLS OVER MUDDY POND WOODS.

It is hardly to be expected, however, that such a law by itself would bring about the desired results. A complete study of the needs of the metropolitan district in the way of the highway facilities demanded by modern conditions is desirable. If, to that end, at any time a special commission should be charged with that function, — a metropolitan board of survey for instance, constituted for purposes similar to those of the Boston board of survey, — much might be looked for through the co-operation of a permanent Metropolitan Park Commission with such a body, in considering the situation from the requirements both of pure utility and of the different interests represented by the park commission.

## II.

### LOCAL PLEASURE GROUNDS, PLAYGROUNDS AND BREATHING SPOTS.

The subject of smaller open spaces for local playgrounds or “breathing spots,” as they are appropriately called, is one so different in its nature as to require a separate consideration and a different method of treatment. Being more of local concern, it is hardly to be expected that they should be provided for by the same means proposed for a general system of metropolitan parks, the various features of which are of moment to the entire community.

It is desirable that every well-inhabited section of the metropolitan district should have one of these local pleasure grounds within easy reach, so that without difficulty women and children can resort thither from their homes without the least danger of fatigue.

Both for the sake of the children and for the convenience and comfort of the community at large such local pleasure grounds are essential. The children are thereby given resorts where they can safely engage in their sports without danger to themselves or annoyance to others. The street is too often the only playground for the children of crowded neighborhoods throughout the entire metropolitan district. It

is evident that such a use of the streets is inevitably attended by danger to life and limb, not to mention the equally serious moral dangers, while it is a source of discomfort and annoyance to the entire population.

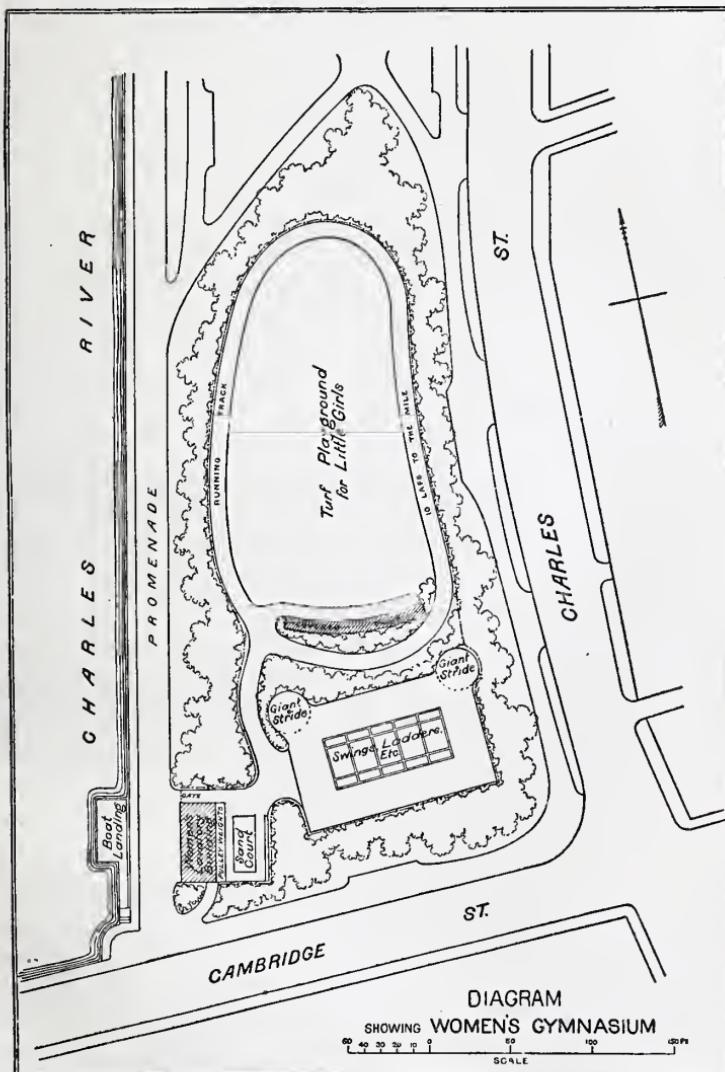
Some sections of the metropolitan district are now fairly well equipped with local pleasure grounds, while others have not made the slightest provision for this most essential feature of urban life. Boston, for instance, has a larger number of these small open spaces than any other city in this country, with the exception of Washington. But even here certain sections are not provided for at all, and these are sections that stand most in need of such accommodations ; as, for instance, the North End and the South Cove. The arrangement of these various spots is, for the most part, of the old-fashioned conventional order, more with an eye to adornment and a merely showy effect by means of flower beds, etc., rather than with a view to their use by the people of the locality.

### *1. Model Examples of Local Pleasure Grounds in Boston.*

Excellent examples, however, of what such local pleasure grounds should be—and, indeed, perhaps the best of their kind in the world, in many respects—are some of the new grounds that have been created by the park department of the city ; for instance, the Charlesbank, the Playstead of Franklin Park and the new playgrounds now under construction at Charlestown, East Boston, and in connection with the Marine Park at South Boston.

The Charlesbank may be cited as an ideal pleasure ground of its sort, providing for the wants of a densely populated neighborhood in a remarkably varied way, giving opportunities for the restful enjoyment of the fresh air in the summer cooled by the waters of the river, for beholding the very interesting spectacle of varied aquatic life, for the athletic recreation of both sexes in first-class out-door gymnasiums, boating on the river, provision for the enjoyment of little children and infants and for taking care of them while their mothers are at work. An institution of this kind is one

of the most beneficent illustrations of what a city may properly do for the welfare of its people, and its influence is inestimable in promoting the health of the multitude and in giving most desirable forms of out-door enjoyment free of cost.



PLAN OF THE SOUTHERLY PORTION OF THE CHARLESBANK, BOSTON,  
NEAR WEST BOSTON BRIDGE.

*2. Present Playground Provisions in Various Communities  
of the Metropolitan District.*

Turning to the other local communities of the metropolitan district, Brookline some years ago adopted the principle of local playgrounds, and has made excellent provisions in this respect; but, as it now proves, not anywhere near what even a community with such an exceptionally high average of well-being, and consequently abundant opportunities for home recreation, really demands in view of its rapid development.

Cambridge has recently become alive to the necessity, and has just taken steps toward providing a number of these local pleasure grounds in various parts of the city, while the development of the invaluable opportunities presented by her river front, with its projected esplanade, now under way, will prove a priceless blessing.

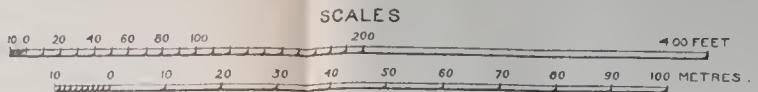
Probably the most conspicuous instance of an absolute neglect to do anything in this respect is furnished by the new city of Everett, which, with its extraordinary growth and the certainty of being occupied by an exceptionally dense population, has yet not so much as a square foot of public pleasure ground. Other cities and towns of the district that are now growing with remarkable rapidity also present a deficiency in this respect almost as serious as that of Everett. Some of them, however, have not advanced so far in their change to urban conditions as to feel the need so sorely as it must soon be felt in a case like that cited.

*3. Certain Drawbacks to the Suburban Movement as a Remedy for the Evils of a Congested Population.*

Allusion has already been made to the fact that this lack of a provision for such open spaces in most parts of the suburbs promises to make the movement of population from the densely inhabited portions of the city out into the more open country but a palliative, at the best, instead of the

CITY OF BOSTON — PARK DEPARTMENT

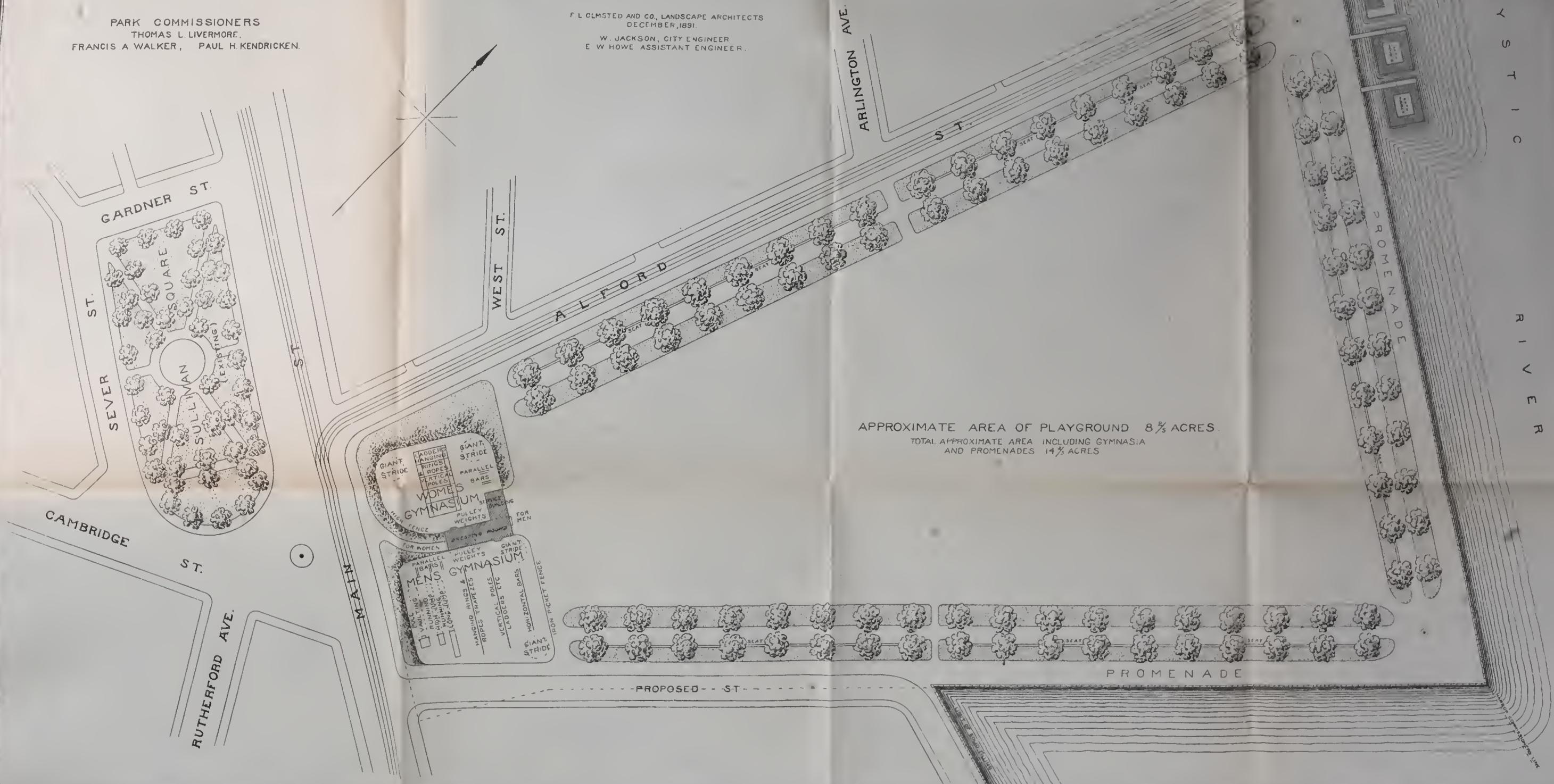
GENERAL PLAN OF  
**CHARLESTOWN PLAYGROUND**



PARK COMMISSIONERS  
THOMAS L. LIVERMORE,  
FRANCIS A. WALKER, PAUL H. KENDRICKEN.

F. L. OLMFSTED AND CO., LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
DECEMBER, 1891.

W. JACKSON, CITY ENGINEER  
E W HOWE ASSISTANT ENGINEER



2.

d  
l  
r  
e  
o  
h  
n

b  
l  
c  
l  
v

i  
i  
t  
c

great remedy for the ills of city life which some of our reformers have seen in it. Indeed, it would be well to consider, in the anti-tenement-house agitation, that the suburban movement has already converted the outlying sections very extensively into tenement-house regions.

In nearly every direction, not only in the suburban wards of Boston, like Dorchester and the various sections of Roxbury, West Roxbury and Brighton, but almost everywhere throughout the metropolitan district where a five-cent street-car or steam-railway fare prevails, as in Somerville, Everett, Cambridge, and even in some parts of Brookline, huge barrack-like “apartment houses,” so called, are becoming the rule. They are closely built, with little or no ground space about them, so that the family clothes-lines are strung upon the roofs. These, while at present largely inhabited by people in moderate circumstances, offer little if any of the various advantages of that suburban life whose praises are so eloquently sounded, and it does not require extraordinary vision to see the near future when they will degenerate into real tenements, with all that the name implies.

Little more can be said in praise of the type of isolated dwellings that has become so common in suburban districts, occupying long and desolate streets with batches of cottages flimsily constructed by contractors, and all alike as so many peas, the streets ill kept, their surroundings cheerless, and the houses so huddled together as to cut off each other from the sunshine, the fullest enjoyment of which should be one of the chief advantages of suburban life. With the mud, the dust, and bad drainage that is apt to prevail in such localities, the permanent advantages offered by such dwelling places are doubtful in comparison to what might be obtained in a well-planned, strictly urban neighborhood, with the good pavements, thorough sewerage and other conveniences at the command of a dense population in a city administered upon enlightened principles. It has already come to pass that many of the suburban neighborhoods that have been developed in the manner just mentioned have lost practically all of the attractiveness belonging to a compara-

tively open country that formed one of the main inducements for people to live there, and, unless local pleasure grounds are provided while it is yet time, the future of such a district can hardly fail to be a dreary one.

#### *4. Ideal Urban Conditions: A Combination of Town and Country.*

An ideal urban community would combine the advantages of both town and country, and there is an unmistakable tendency to-day in the development of our modern social conditions to bring the country to the town and carry the town to the country. That is, with the facilities of quick transit, our rural communities are gaining more and more of the advantages that hitherto have been exclusively urban; while, on the other hand, the advantages possessed by the natural life of the country are becoming more and more appreciated by the cities, and the latter are gradually shaping themselves accordingly. For instance, this is seen in the desire to get rid of the noise and confusion of city life, in the vastly increasing esteem in which out-door life and amusements, and the athletic development gained thereby, are held by city people, and the part which great parks and public gardens are assuming in the social economy of our cities.

An ideal city would be one which would take every possible advantage of the natural opportunities of its site, and which would so alternate open spaces with areas occupied by dwellings that it would practically occupy one vast garden. A city planned in this way, beside its frequent great parks and its water-side esplanades, driveways and other reservations, would probably have its houses so arranged around pleasant garden-like open spaces, with such facilities for out-door enjoyment as we have mentioned, that every dwelling would face upon a pleasure ground of some kind.





21. Muddy Pond, West Roxbury.

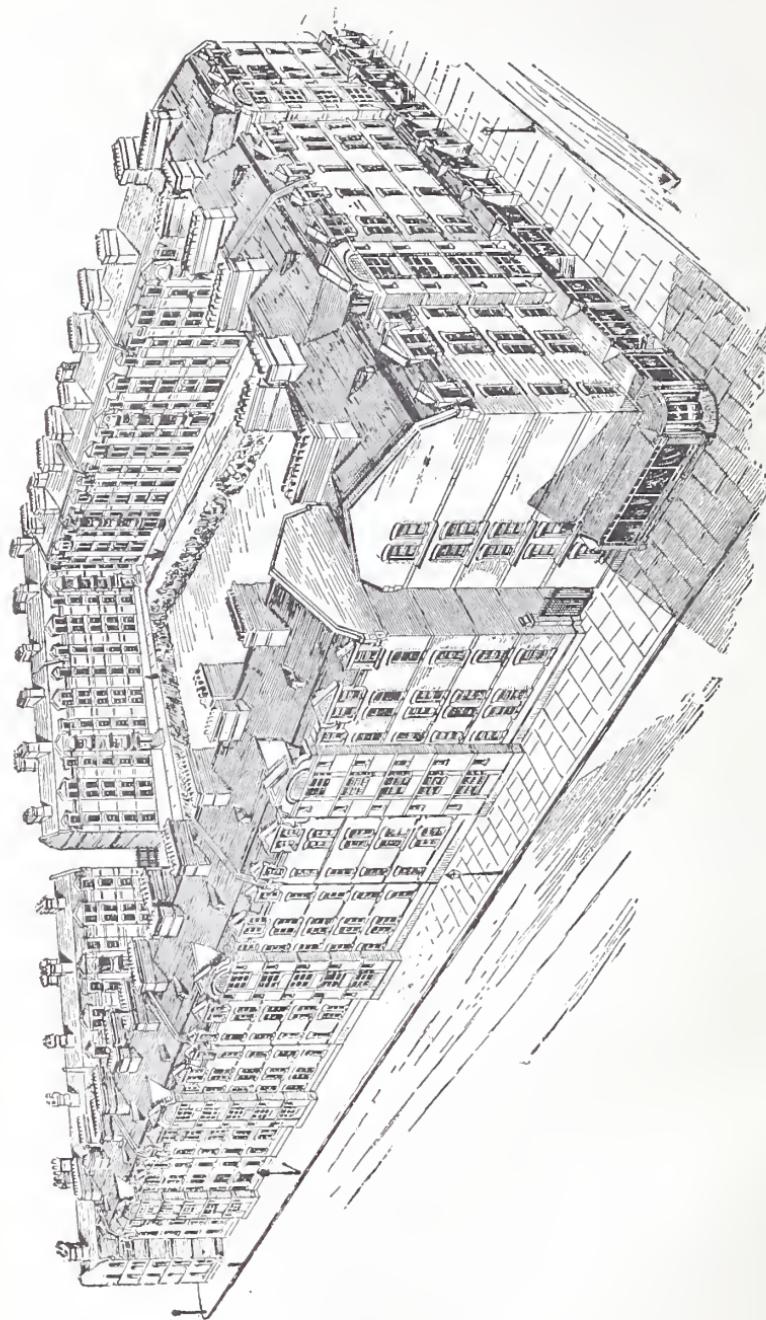
5. *The Tendencies towards this Ideal as illustrated in Boston To-day.*

It is notable that to-day, here in Boston, this tendency may be seen illustrated at both ends of the social scale. For instance, the wealthy, in the planning and location of their homes, are appreciating the advantages derived from combining the enjoyment of social conveniences in common with a more open situation of their dwellings, and plenty of breathing space around about. The most conspicuous examples of this tendency are afforded in the “terrace” style, so called, extensively adopted in the neighborhood of the new Beacon Street boulevard, and extraordinarily popular.

6. *Tenement Blocks with Central Garden and Playground Spaces.*

At the other extreme is found the example lately set in England in the construction and planning of artisan dwellings very happily followed in Boston. Perhaps the most notable English example is that of the Victoria Square improvement, carried out by the city of Liverpool. To get rid of a slum-like locality that was a source of disease and crime, the city condemned the territory, demolished the buildings, and built thereupon, around a hollow square, blocks of model dwellings for working people, the sanitary appliances being of the very best description, and the central square devoted to the purpose of a garden playground.

This idea has been followed by the Co-operative Building Company of Boston, which, on the rectangular lot bounded by Harrison Avenue, East Lenox, Reed and Newcomb streets, has built a substantial block of dwellings about a central open space of eighty by one hundred feet. The apartments are most conveniently arranged, and are to be let at moderate prices, while the central space is to be used for playground and garden purposes for the tenants. Under such circumstances the evils attendant upon a dense population appear to be very thoroughly overcome. All the



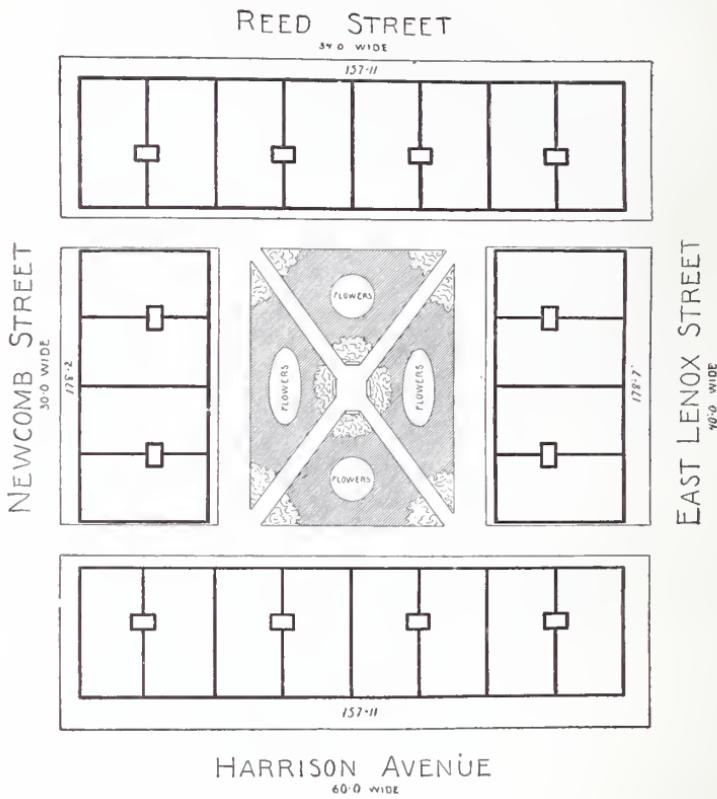
Artisans' Dwellings erected by the Municipality, Liverpool, England.

dwellings have abundant air and sunshine, and the central garden offers an opportunity where children may be safely left to play together, while adult residents may frequent the place for out-door rest and relaxation.

Such a central open space of course does not offer all the advantages of a more general playground several acres in extent, with its free sweep of air; but, on the other hand, it has in its favor relative privacy and seclusion, while, being sheltered from the winds, it may be used to a greater extent throughout the year than a general playground. If the sections of a city inhabited by the artisan classes could either be originally laid out, or reconstructed, after this fashion, it would be, of course, an inestimable blessing, and would to a very great extent supply the needed playground facilities.

It is conceivable that such a style of construction might immensely promote missionary work of the most practical description among the poor. Few things could be more conducive to an orderly manner of living. It would doubtless be desirable to set apart in every block of this kind a certain space for neighborhood purposes; to be occupied, for instance, as a kindergarten by day, and utilized at other times for talks on housekeeping, instruction in cooking and other branches of domestic science, and as a sort of club room and reading room for the locality in the evening. It would seem, therefore, highly desirable to encourage the construction of dwellings of this class about open spaces.

To this end it might be well to suggest that, where dwellings are thus built about a central open space, in a manner satisfactory to competent authorities, such open space may be leased to the city or town for a nominal sum, either for a stated term of years, or for the period during which the surrounding dwellings shall be devoted to the purposes for which they were designed. The land would thus be free of taxation, and a proportionately low rate of rental would be encouraged. The taking of the land by the city in this manner, while it would secure the desired small open spaces for playground purposes, would enable it to revert to its



Plan of Tenements erected by the Co-operative Building Company,  
Boston.



22. THE FOWL MEADOWS, NEONSET RIVER. After a photograph by Benjamin Kimball.



owners whenever local conditions should so change as to render the site desirable for other uses, say mercantile or manufacturing purposes. This, of course, should be conditional upon the rates of rental not exceeding a certain maximum per apartment, or room. The care of the ground would best be given into the hands of the owners of the property, with the right to restrict its use to the persons occupying the adjacent dwellings.

#### *7. Local Pleasure Grounds a Subject of World-wide Interest.*

The suitable establishment of local pleasure grounds is a subject that is occupying much attention in other parts of the world. In England, for instance, the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, of London, under the chairmanship of the Earl of Meath, has performed invaluable service in promoting the establishment of open spaces, and information concerning this work is constantly being sought from various parts of the world. In the admirable annual reports of this organization a map of London is included, showing the work done by the association up to date since 1882. In the report for 1891 two hundred and forty-six different examples of work completed are exhibited, while the list of unfinished work carries the number up to two hundred and ninety-seven. The map of London is thus thickly sprinkled by the marks showing where the association has been at work. These achievements include the establishment of new playgrounds, the improvement of old ones, the planting of trees, the erection of fountains, contributions towards gymnasiums, etc., the placing of seats in open spaces, the opening up of disused or abandoned churchyards as recreation grounds, and various other forms of activity.

Such an association could hardly fail to be very valuable here as an auxiliary to the work of official park boards, in offering suggestions, creating public sentiment and preventing unwise action in relation to public grounds.

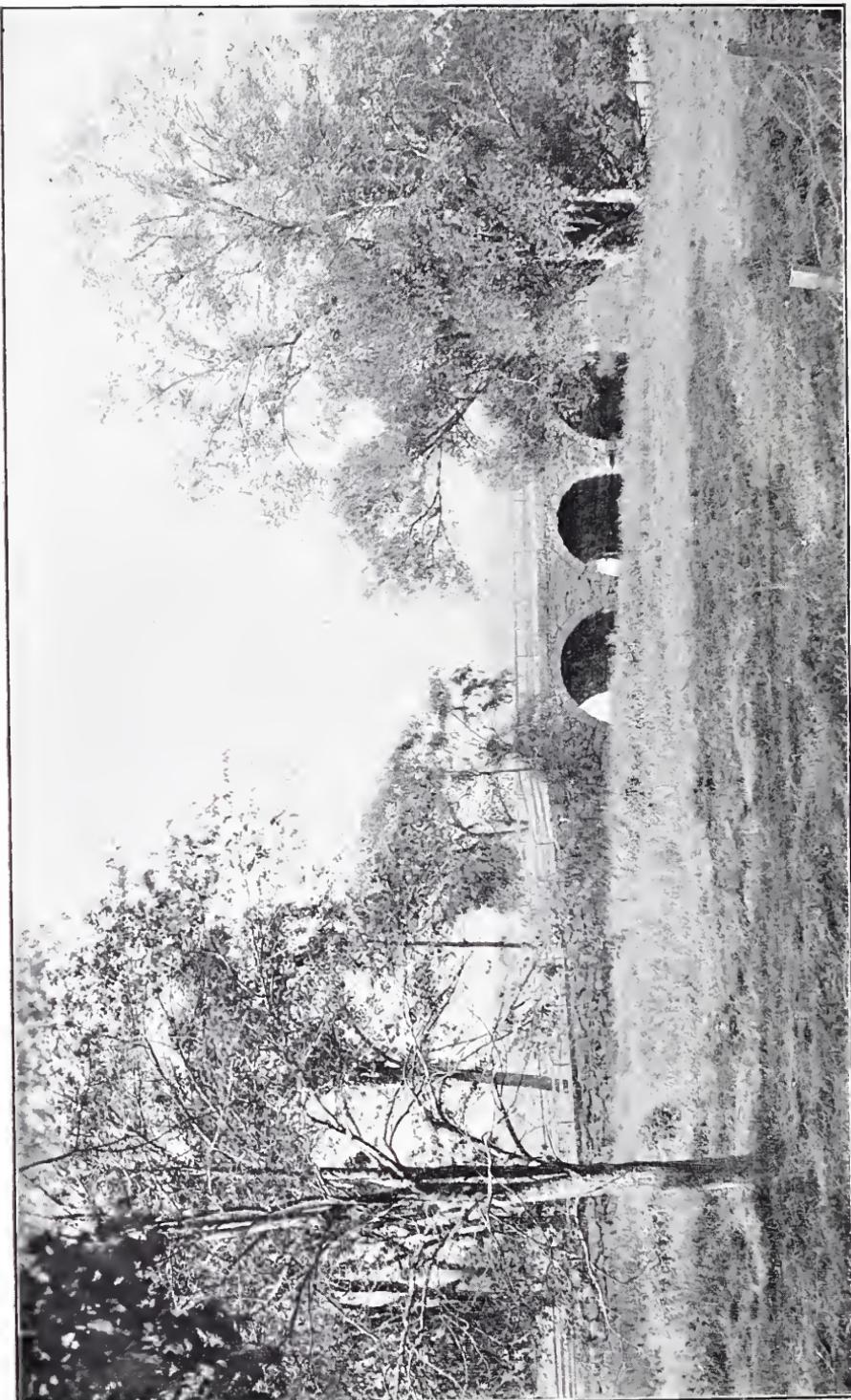
A letter from Mr. Basil Holmes, the secretary of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, in reply to an inquiry from this commission, states that his association holds "that open spaces in towns should be compulsorily provided, and, as buildings extend, so shall open spaces be provided for the newly built area. The question of cost comes in, and, inasmuch as the open land near a town has become valuable through no action of the owner, many people consider it would not be unfair that the owner should be compelled to pay, say a ten per cent. tax on all new ground rents, for the provision of open spaces, or that he himself should have to reserve as open land an adequate proportion of his property. But we have not come to that here yet, and at present open spaces are paid for out of the rates which are levied on the occupiers."

It is possible that eventually the necessity of adequate open spaces for playgrounds will be so generally recognized that a law requiring all communities of a certain density of population to provide them will be deemed advisable, being demanded in the interests of the health and morals of growing generations. Such a law would be in line with the educational policy long since adopted by the Commonwealth, as manifest, for instance, in the requirement that towns of a certain population shall maintain a high school. But it is very likely that public sentiment itself may soon become so alive to the necessities of the case that compulsion will no more be called for than it is in the matter of providing proper school facilities.

In this connection it is worthy of note that the secretary of the Berlin city government's committee on public parks, in answering inquiries from this commission, stated that in Prussia every community is so alive to the importance of public parks and gardens that there has been no need of any special law on the subject.



23. PAUL's BRIDGE, NEPONSET RIVER. After a photograph by George H. Chickering.



*8. Need of Foresight in establishing Local Pleasure  
Grounds.*

As it is with great difficulty and expense that a community is provided with the proper local pleasure grounds after it has become well populated, it seems desirable that these should be provided for by their location in advance of the growth of the population; just as in Boston the wise policy has recently been adopted of laying out, in a thoroughly systematic manner, the entire highway system of the city over the as yet unoccupied territory in anticipation of future growth. It would likewise be well to lay out in the same way the local pleasure grounds that would be needed for the growth of a community. Should it be deemed advisable in the future to establish a metropolitan board of survey, it would be well to co-ordinate its work with that of the Metropolitan Parks Commission, so that at the same time the latter could designate the most suitable sites for these local pleasure grounds, and make the reservations accordingly.

The existence of these reservations would offer a strong inducement for the growth of the communities in the proper directions, since their neighborhoods would naturally be most attractive. It is a too common error, in securing such sites, to hold that one piece of land is as good as another. Availability for the purpose should first be had in mind, and, other things being equal, accessibility together with attractiveness of site and the embracing of pleasant natural features should form a leading consideration, while situation in relation to prevailing winds, exposure to sunshine and neighborhood to bodies of water should be also held in view.

Practically the same reasons that have operated in preventing the various local communities from taking action in regard to the larger pleasure grounds have also kept them from establishing these local open spaces. They have been too busy with other affairs, their resources have been too heavily drawn upon in meeting the ordinary requirements for their growth, to permit them to pay attention to this im-

portant subject. It is extremely desirable that they should take the matter in hand while the opportunity remains, so that they will not be prevented from doing anything by the great expense to which it will put them. Therefore some form of legislative encouragement that will induce them to act for themselves seems advisable.

#### *9. Legislation recommended.*

The method in mind is different in principle from that which has been suggested in relation to the establishment of a general park system. The local pleasure grounds are matters of more purely local concern, and the function of a Metropolitan Parks Commission would therefore more properly be advisory, leaving the separate communities to act for themselves under the incentive which such legislation would give.

It might, therefore, be recommended that, wherever any cities and towns in the metropolitan district desire to establish local open spaces for playground purposes, they be permitted to exceed their debt limits by the amount of the bonded indebtedness necessary to that end, and that the bonds so issued may constitute a special lien upon the lands thus acquired. A provision ought to be added that the said sites and plans for construction shall be approved by the Metropolitan Parks Commission. In order to make this opportunity available to the people of the Commonwealth in general, outside of the metropolitan district, the same provision should apply to all cities of the Commonwealth, substituting the Trustees of Public Reservations for the Metropolitan Parks Commission, the former acting as advisors to the governor and council in the matter.

The city of Boston has been permitted to exceed its debt limit in the expenditures not only for acquiring, but constructing, its public parks, and there appears to be no reason why this policy, in the former respect at least, should not be the privilege of all cities in the Commonwealth. In the case of permanent improvements, like municipal lighting





24. NEPONSET RIVER NEAR MATTAPAN. After a photograph by Roland Thaxter.

works and water works, cities and towns are permitted to exceed their debt limits, and public open spaces certainly fall in the same category.

A draft of a bill intended to bring these results about is appended to this statement for the consideration of the commissioners; as also the draft of an act concerning the erection of dwellings about central spaces. [See Appendices C and D.]

SYLVESTER BAXTER,

*Secretary.*

## REPORT OF THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT.

---

*To the Metropolitan Park Commission.*

GENTLEMEN:— You have asked me to report to you upon the opportunities presented by the neighborhood of Boston for the creation of such public open spaces as may best promote the health and happiness of the inhabitants of the metropolitan district. I have given my best attention to the problem, and now beg leave to submit the following paper, asking you to excuse its manifest shortcomings, in view of the great breadth of the field it essays to cover.

### INTRODUCTION.

The life history of humanity has proved nothing more clearly than that crowded populations, if they would live in health and happiness, must have space for air, for light, for exercise, for rest, and for the enjoyment of that peaceful beauty of nature which, because it is the opposite of the noisy ugliness of towns, is so wonderfully refreshing to the tired souls of townspeople.

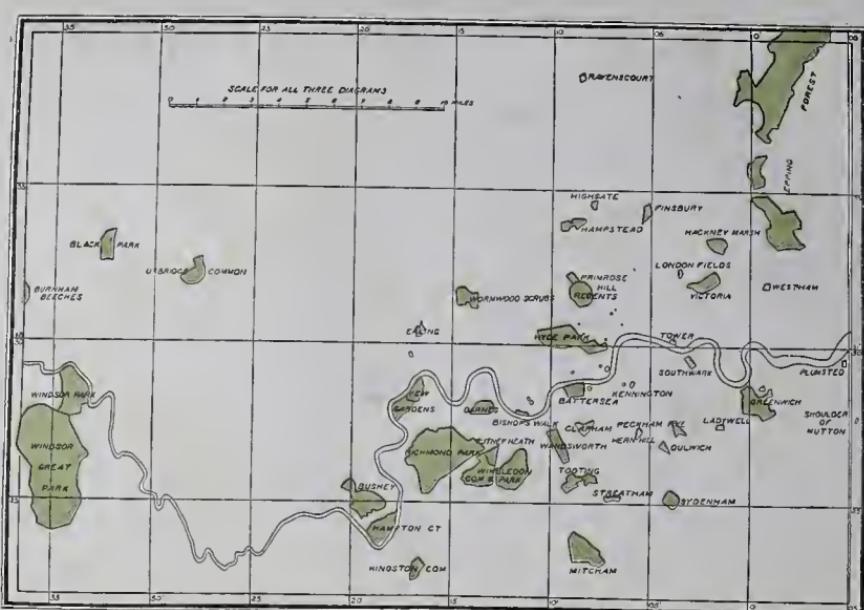
Most of the greatest centres of the population of the world have now accepted the teachings of bitter experience, and have provided themselves with the necessary and desirable open areas, albeit at immense expense and with great difficulty. The accompanying diagrams show the extent of the public open spaces now existing in the neighborhood of Paris and of London, in comparison with those now existing near Boston. “Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other,” said Benjamin Franklin. Shall Franklin’s birthplace play the fool’s part? Presumably this is the question which the Metropolitan Park Commission and the people of the metropolitan district will ask the General Court to answer.

If, then, it be determined that the metropolitan district of Boston shall be wise; and shall provide itself with ample open spaces while it may yet do so at small expense, upon what considerations

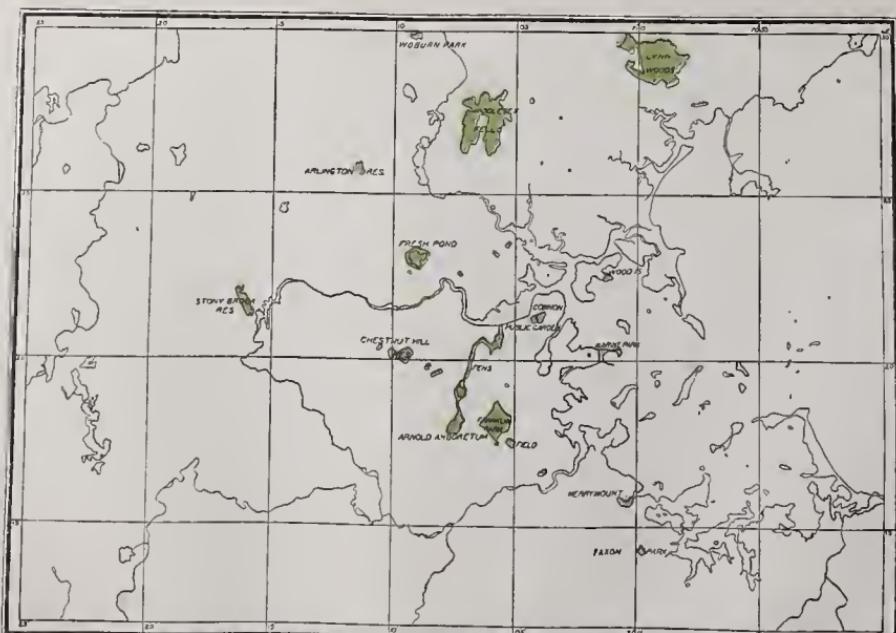
PARIS.



LONDON



BOSTON.



The open spaces of Paris, London and Boston, drawn to the same scale.







25. NEPONSET RIVER UNDER MILTON HILL.

should the selection of lands for public open spaces be based? Obviously this question cannot be answered intelligently without a somewhat detailed study both of the natural or geographical features of the district in question, and of the manner in which crowded settlement has affected these natural features to the advantage or injury of the population concerned. When such a study shall have brought forth the facts in the case, it will be possible to deduce therefrom the considerations which should govern the scientific selection of lands for public open spaces; and it will then only remain to review the existing open spaces, and to propose new reservations in the light of the considerations so established. In other words, this report falls naturally into three parts, as follows: —

PART I.—A summary of the physical and historical geography of the metropolitan district.

PART II.—A study of the way in which the peculiar geography of the metropolitan district ought to govern the selection of the sites of public open spaces.

PART III.—A review of the opportunities which still present themselves for creating new open spaces in accordance with the governing considerations just laid down.

#### P A R T F I R S T .

*The Rock Foundation.*—Underneath the whole region — under the sea, the rivers, the woods — lie the rocks of the crust of the earth. The oldest and hardest of these rocks, beside underlying the whole district, stand up in two conspicuous though broken ridges, — that which extends from Waltham to Cape Ann, sometimes called the Wellington Hills, and that which from the earliest settlement has borne the name of the Blue Hills. The northern mass of rock, though broken in many places by deep transverse valleys, such as those of the Mystic, Malden and Saugus rivers, generally presents to the south a steep, wall-like front, about one hundred feet in elevation. In its eastern extension its highland surface is exceedingly rough, broken into rocky knobs and narrow hollows, now and then rising into exceptionally high summits, such as Bear Hill (three hundred and twenty-five feet) in Stoneham, and Burrill's Hill (two hundred and eighty-five feet) in Lynn.\*

---

\* See illustrations Nos. 1, 5, 6, 7.

The southern rock-mass of the Blue Hills differs from the northern in that it is carved into a dozen rounded and partially separated hills, steepest on their south sides, and varying in elevation above the sea from three hundred to more than six hundred feet, being the highest hills standing thus near the coast of the continent from Maine to Mexico.\*

Between these much-worn stumps or roots of ancient mountains—the Wellington Hills and the Blue Hills—lies a region some fifteen miles wide, in which the primitive rocks which form these mountain stumps have been depressed so far, and the secondary rocks which lie upon the primitive rocks have been worn down so deep, that the sea has flowed over both and formed Boston bay. Not that the waters of the bay wash against shores of rock. On the contrary, the points within this region where the sea meets the rocks are very few, the most conspicuous being the ocean fronts of Swampscott and Cohasset, Nahant, the outer islands and Squantum. Such rocks as do appear above the surface within the Boston basin are of mixed kinds; among them the various slates of Quincy, Cambridge and Somerville, and the conglomerate or pudding-stone which forms Squaw Rock at Squantum and the great bosses of ledge which protrude in spots in Roxbury and elsewhere. But generally throughout this depressed region there is no solid rock in sight. Even the rivers rarely discover any, except at their several so-called “falls.” Another material, which must next be examined, forms almost all the sea-shore, the river-banks, and the dry land of the space between the massive uplifts of the Wellington and the Blue Hills.

*The Glacial Rubbish.*—Dumped in various sorts of heaps, alike upon the uplifted and the depressed parts of the rock foundation of the district, lies an enormous quantity of clay, gravel and stones of all sizes and kinds,—stuff which the moving ice-sheets of successive glacial periods bore away from northern regions. The largest of these heaps form very conspicuous objects in the scenery of the district, being great rounded hills of symmetrical form, such as are numerous in the neighborhood of Chelsea and all about Boston harbor.† Lesser heaps take the form of steep mounds and narrow and long ridges, often enclosing bowl-like hollows from which there is only an underground escape for water. More important are the large areas in which the glacial material has been worked over by running waters in such a way as to produce

\* See illustrations Nos. 20, 22, 26.

† See illustrations Nos. 10, 29, 31.





26. NEPONSET MARSHES AND THE DISTANT BLUE HILLS.

almost level plains, which, in sharp contrast to the steep hills, are almost free from boulders of large size. It is with this material, dumped in these various forms, that the region where the ledge rocks are sunk is filled and brought above the level of the sea.

*The Fresh Waters.* — Upon the surfaces already described — the well-rubbed rocks and the rounded heaps of glacial wreckage — fall rain and snow, which gathers itself into streams and sets out for the sea. But the course of the waters throughout all this region is difficult and tortuous in the extreme. Turned this way and that by the accumulations of glacial stuff, the streams follow few sharply defined valleys, but wander about in an unusually aimless manner. In the highland parts of the district rain-waters are caught in rock-rimmed hollows, or in basins formed by dams of glacial drift, from which they can escape only by overflowing the rim or dam. Thus almost every hollow, even at two hundred feet above the sea, contains a pond, or a swamp which is a clogged pond, while along the courses of the brooks and rivers similar morasses appear at frequent intervals.\* Even the Charles River, the largest stream of the region, suffers in its course from just these difficulties. At Dedham it is suddenly turned aside from a short route to the sea by way of the Neponset valley; and then at Newton Upper Falls the hard rock which it has there chanced to hit upon serves as a dam, which makes a great swamp of all the lowlands for several miles up stream. It need hardly be added that, however it may be with respect to healthfulness, with respect to scenery these retardations of the waters in ponds and swamps are a very valuable and charming addition to a landscape already wonderfully varied and picturesque.

*The Sea.* — Eastward on a clear day, from almost any of the numerous rock or gravel hill-tops of the district, is seen the distant horizon of the sea, — sometimes a long field of blue spread across the whole fifteen miles from the Roaring Bull of Marblehead to the Black Rock of Cohasset, and sometimes only a bowl-shaped patch lying between some near or distant elevations of the mainland.

The ocean rocks of Marblehead and Cohasset guard the entrance to Boston bay. Sweeping between them with an unbroken surface, the salt waters presently meet with many and various obstructions, which everywhere betray the marks of the destructive or constructive energy of the waves. The rock island of Nahant has been gnawed into by the surf until its coast is ragged and picturesque in

---

\* See illustrations Nos. 3, 15, 16, 21, 22.

the extreme ; but, in return, the sea has formed out of the waste of the land a beautiful beach, which makes a perfect causeway connecting the island with the main. One step further inland, and similar evidences of the work of the sea appear on every hand. Here the waters meet the foremost of those great hills of clay and stones which the ice age bequeathed to the present. Grover's Cliff, Winthrop Great Head,\* Great Brewster Island, Point Allerton and Strawberry Hill still stand boldly in the front against the sea ; although they are now but fragments of their originally symmetrical masses. From the feet of their steep bluffs, long curving beaches, built by the sea, stretch away to unite themselves with the next adjacent mounds or hills ; or else to join in never-ending conflict with some strong tidal current, as at Shirley and Hull guts.

The waves as they roll inland along the converging coasts of the bay are ever bringing fresh material wherewith to close the remaining gaps and shut up the port of Boston ; but the flowing and ebbing tides are fortunately as constantly at work to keep the entrance open, so that no appreciable narrowing of the passages is accomplished. Once inside Point Shirley and Point Pemberton, the now stilled waters play around numerous other hills of the kind geologists call drumlins, here cutting a steep bluff out of the side or end of one of them ;† here, by building beaches, linking two or three together to form an island or a stretch of coast ; or here again reaching far inland between the hills to receive the freshwaters of brooks and rivers. Finally, behind the beaches and in all the stillest parts of the tidal region, the growth of grasses on the muddy flats has resulted in the building up of wide-spread and open levels of salt marsh, in which the tidal currents are able to keep open only a few sinuous channels.‡ On the north the marshes and the salt creeks extend to the very feet of the rock highlands. Westward the salt water of Charles River reaches inland six miles from the State House. On the south the estuaries and marshes of the Neponset and of Weymouth Fore and Back rivers present beautiful pictures of mingled land and water. This flowing of the sea about the half-sunken drumlins has produced scenery which, were it not so familiar, would be considered wonderfully varied and fine.

*The Effects of Human Occupancy.*—Into this region of marvellously commingled waters, marshes, gravel banks and rocks

---

\* See illustration No. 11.

† See illustrations Nos. 28, 29.

‡ See illustrations Nos. 8, 9, 10, 25, 26, 27.

came the English colonists of the seventeenth century; and, from Miles Standish of Plymouth to Thomas Morton of Merrymount, every man among them had only praise for the scenery. To Standish, after he had landed at Squantum and voyaged up Mystic River, the region seemed “the paradise of all these parts,” and he very naturally wished the Plymouth people “had there been seated.” For Morton, the educated sportsman, the blue waters, the salt meadows, and the great woods which framed the coves of marsh grass with a wall of varied verdure, composed a great free hunting park the like of which all England could not boast.

The annihilation of the native red men by a plague had left the country comparatively safe, and, although the first houses of Boston were built on the peninsula of Shawmut, because of its advantages in case of attack, Governor Winthrop and the other leaders soon took up large outlying estates, while outlying settlements were also made very early. The steep drumlin hills of Shawmut, surrounded and even divided as they were by the tides, afforded but little opportunity for tillage, and compelled a scattering of the people, and when this took place it was to the most accessible of the few smooth parts of the neighborhood that they went. Wherever a navigable river or creek swept past a gentle slope of the glacial drift, there a settlement was made; and from such settlements grew Lynn, Medford, Cambridge, Watertown and the other older townships of the colony. The creeks were the first roads and the marshes the first hayfields. So reluctant were the colonists to attempt the subjugation of the great woods and the slopes of boulders, that, when the open spots near at hand had been occupied, hundreds of people braved the dangers of a long march over Indian trails to reach and settle in the soft intervals of the Connecticut valley. Had the prairies of the West been accessible, the rougher parts of the district would hardly yet have been tamed. As it was, when population increased, men were forced to take up axe and crow-bar in grim earnest. The great hills of boulder clay had to be made cultivable; generation after generation labored with the trees and stones, and at last the rounded hills stood forth as mounds of green, marked and divided by walls of field stones, and sometimes crowned, as at Clapboardtree Corner in Dedham, with the white churches of the victors. Naturally the bounding hills of rock were only entered for their timber; nothing else was to be won from their wild crags. After two hundred years of these arduous labors, the neighborhood of Boston was a lovely land. The broad or narrow marshes still lay open



27. BLACK'S CREEK, QUINCY.

cheap and unsightly ways. Factories have placed themselves along the rivers and brooks ; and near the factories, and always with their backs to the stream, are built the houses or tenements of the employees. Thus a once pure stream is at one blow made both foul and ugly. So also with the many areas of ill-drained upland. Wet land being cheap, it is cheaply built upon, to the detriment of both the healthfulness and the beauty of the district.

As to the original drumlin hills of the district, some have been wholly dug away for filling, others have had great holes cut out of them, others have had streets run up them at steep grades, and houses possessed of extra floors on their lower sides stuck all over them. A few hills of this difficult kind in the upland regions of Brookline have been so skilfully laid out that the roads are easy and the general result pleasing ; but most of the old drumlins have been badly treated, and the result is ugliness and inconvenience.

Lastly, the same rock hills which baffled the men who cleared the drumlins are now found to present most serious obstacles to the easy construction of cities. In addition to their exceeding roughness, the very hardness of their rocks makes the necessary excavations for streets, cellars, water-pipes and sewers very expensive ; and accordingly the larger rocky regions of the district have not yet been seriously invaded by the waves of population flowing against their feet.

## PART SECOND.

Assuming now a thorough acquaintance with this strange city of the marshes and the hills, we must next inquire in what manner the peculiar facts of the situation about Boston should influence the selection of permanent open spaces.

We have found that the metropolitan district of Boston lies, even at this late day, between two wildernesses ; on the one hand the untamed heights of the rock-hills, on the other the untamable sea. If it be true that easy access to the refreshing beauty of the natural world is of the greatest benefit to crowded townspeople, the people of this favored district have only to say the word and to pay out a little money annually during a term of years, and this best of possessions will be theirs at once and forever. Here the busy and the poor can find near home that best of antidotes to the poisonous excitement of city life, which the rich win by travel or by living in luxurious country seats. From every one of the greater of the encircling hills, even from the

for children and youth are among the necessities of modern town life. Large or continuous open spaces, like those about to be suggested, will provide ample playground for the children of the population seated near them; so that smaller squares, gardens and open-air sitting-rooms and nurseries will need to be provided only in those crowded districts which the larger spaces do not serve. All scientific planning of open spaces for large cities proceeds thus from the greater to the less. The greater spaces are of first account, because if they are not acquired at the right time they can never be had, and because they afford not only fresh air and playroom, which is all that small spaces can offer, but also those free pleasures of the open world of which small spaces can give no hint. Moreover, in the case under consideration, the peculiar subdivision of the metropolitan district of Boston into thirty-six separate political units makes it unreasonable, and indeed impossible, to expect that these units should act as one body or pay as one body for more than the principal, leading or trunkline open spaces of the district. Such small spaces as will be needed after the larger spaces are provided will have to be acquired by the action of local authorities or by the co-operative action of two or more such bodies; and, since small spaces are almost entirely of local benefit, this seems to be quite as it should be.

#### P A R T   T H I R D.

The foregoing studies have led to the conclusion that those large or continuous open spaces which will most benefit the whole population of the metropolitan district are situated on the rock-hills, along the stream banks, and on the sea and bay shores. Now, therefore, it becomes a pleasant duty to examine each of these special sections of the district in some detail, in order that we may learn to what extent these hills and shores are already dedicated to public uses, and in order that we may determine what particular parts thereof can, with the greatest economy and advantage, be forthwith added to the public domain.

*The Rock-hills.* — In the whole length of the northern rock-hills only one crowded town is really founded upon them,—namely, Marblehead, which had to twist its crooked lanes between the ledges in order to avail itself of a good harbor. From several public points of vantage on the rocks of the shore the townspeople, with great numbers of visitors from a distance, annually view the beautiful pageants of the yacht fleets of New England.





28. THOMSON'S ISLAND, FROM LITTLE SQUANTUM.

In Swampscott, the next towshipp, the rock-hills are beginning to be occupied by houses which look southward to the blue waters of Nahant Bay, over the narrow strip of drift lands upon which stood the fishing village of the past.

In Lynn the original settlers occupied a somewhat wider strip of coast lands, and during many years held the rocks in their rear as "commons." When at last they were divided they were used as wood lots. Even wheu a few years ago Lynn had become a city of fifty thousand inhabitants, the hills were still as uninhabited as ever ; so that when the need of a public water supply arose, the city had only to collect, by means of a few dams in the valleys, the uncontaminated rainfall of her own wooded highlands. Meanwhile many citizens had come to appreciate the great value to a crowded population of these neighboring wild rocks with their broad views over the ocean, the ponds and the woods ; and soon whatever lands remained between the tracts acquired by the water board were given to or purchased by the Lynn park board, and through it dedicated to the enjoyment of the public. To-day the Lynn Woods embrace some two thousand acres, and constitute the largest and most interesting, because the wildest, public domain in all New England. On the other hand, if we exclude the expenditures of the water board, the woods have cost the public treasury of Lynn only thirty-five thousand dollars. About one hundred public-spirited private citizens have contributed in gifts of land and money the equivalent of another thirty-five thousand dollars. Thus for the small sum of seventy thousand dollars the "city of shoes" has obtained a permanent and increasingly beautiful possession which is already bringing to her a new and precious renown.

Westward again, beyond the deep-cut valley of Saugus River, the next great body of the highlands contains many fine parts, such as the rough hills in northern Saugus, the bold frontal elevations which overlook the great marshes, the charming hollow of Swain's Pond and the pretty valleys of the brooks which flow towards Pranker's Pond. It is to be hoped that the real-estate dealers, who will soon be cutting up this region, and the townships which include it in their limits, will unite upon a sensible scheme of development by which the courses of the brooks and the highest rocks will be secured to the public, thus insuring the perpetual continuance of that picturesque attractiveness which is sure to lead population into this region before long. Such laying out of lands for sale as has been done here has been done badly, except at Pine Banks on the edge of the next cross valley — that of Malden

River — where a single landowner has built many roads, in a particularly charming locality, upon lines which properly conform to the topography. But even here it will be necessary, when the selling of house lots begins, to reserve long strips and blocks of open ground, if that beauty of situation which gives a special value to the house sites is to be preserved.

Just beyond the once charming but now populous vale of Malden River we must climb a rocky cliff in order to enter the next wild region, once called the Five Mile Woods, but now generally known as the Middlesex Fells.\* Unlike the two preceding plateaux, this elevated region is entirely surrounded by rapidly growing towns and cities, whose boundary lines meet among the rocks. Four of the surrounding municipalities draw water from its valleys, and for the protection of the purity of the waters large areas of land have lately been converted from private to public ownership. Other public holdings of the region are Bear Hill, the highest summit, controlled by the park board of Stoneham, and Virginia Wood, the gift of the late Mrs. Fanny H. Tudor to the Trustees of Public Reservations. In short, this region of wild rocks and dells is now in the same condition in which the Lynn Woods lay before the park board knit together the disjointed pre-existing reservations by acquiring the intervening and surrounding lands. On the other hand, the Middlesex Fells cannot, under existing conditions, be broadly united into one great reservation, because they lie within the bounds, not of one municipality, but of five. When new legislation shall have provided an instrument by which the unifying work which has been done in Lynn may be accomplished in the divided Fells, the people of Boston, Cambridge, Somerville and the nearer municipalities will soon find themselves possessed of a common domain which, with its Spot Pond, its Bear Hill, its Pine Hill and its many less conspicuous but delightful ponds, pools, brooks and crags, will rival, if it will not surpass, Lynn Woods.

Westward once more, beyond the Mystic River valley, the swelling highlands of Winchester, Arlington and Belmont are far less rugged than those of Lynn, Saugus, Melrose and the Fells. They are cultivable in most parts, while in Arlington the so-called Heights have become a suburban colony, the inhabitants of which can see the New Hampshire mountains in one direction and the ocean in the other. Two-thirds of the way over to the Charles

---

\* See illustrations Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7.



## BLUE HILLS

MASS.

SURVEYED

BY  
E.G. CHAMBERLAIN

1880 - 1885

SCALE 30,000

Altitudes are referred to mean tide.

- ▷ Three Pt Sta. Lat. and Long should be within  $\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  or 50 feet.
- Pocket Compass Sta. Position and altitude approximate.

Paths traced principally in 1880

Paths much used are Paths not well defined ----

Paths end  $\frac{1}{2}$  miles Paths traced no farther  $\frac{1}{2}$  miles

0  $\frac{1}{4}$   $\frac{1}{2}$   $\frac{3}{4}$  1 MILE



River valley, Beaver Brook issues from the highlands through a miniature gorge and then flows among some glacial ridges upon which stand the largest surviving oak trees of our district.\* The waterfall in the little gorge and this famous grove of oaks should certainly be preserved ; but this cannot be accomplished under any statutes now in force, because the brook is the dividing line between Belmont and Waltham. Again, as in the case of the Fells, an instrumentality new to our community is needed.

Still following along the front of the highlands, past Owl Hill and Cedar Hill, it is not until the heart of Waltham is reached that any present need of a large open space appears. Here is a rapidly increasing community which is fortunate in finding at its very doors both a pretty river and a great and rugged hill. The river's surface is perhaps twenty feet above the average level of the sea ; the hilltop one mile distant from the river rises to an elevation of four hundred and sixty feet. One who stands upon it looks eastward down the Charles River valley to where the golden dome of the State House glistens against the distant blue horizon of the sea. The slopes of the hill, still preserved from ugly scars, present several particularly attractive spots, and the neighboring but lesser Bear Hill has a distinct beauty of its own. The whole tract lies within the bounds of Waltham, so that there is nothing to prevent the opening of a reservation on this hill through local action. The hill, however, is so well placed, both with reference to the view up and down the Charles valley and with respect to its position in the metropolitan district, that it would merit the attention of whatever metropolitan parks board may be established.

Leaving Prospect Hill and Bear Hill, it is but a short distance to the large collecting reservoir owned by the city of Cambridge. Here the waters of Stony Brook are held in a long narrow valley before setting out for Cambridge or escaping to the Charles. At the mouth of the stream is the stone tower built by Professor Horsford to mark his conception of the site of a Norse city, and at the valley's head is a rocky passage through which the brook enters the reservoir with a rush.

The point now reached is just half-way around the inland circuit of the metropolitan district ; in other words, it is ten miles due west from the State House. Moreover, it is at the meeting place of the Charles River and the northern highlands. The lower

---

\* See illustration No. 14.

reaches of the river and the easy roads of its valley lead thence through populous regions to the city, while the upper river valley leads south-eastward along the border of the metropolitan district towards the southern highland of the Blue Hills. So central a situation, should, if possible, afford a large and interesting public recreation ground, and it is most fortunate that nature has here provided all the elements and placed them ready to our hands. If to the charming water park of Charles River and Stony Brook there be added not only Prospect Hill to the north of the reservoir but also Doublet Hill on the south, a very satisfactory reservation will be obtained. The latter hill, while not so high as Prospect, commands more pleasing views of the river valley, while from the surface of the stream it is itself an attractive, and sometimes an imposing, object.

Passing now up the Charles River valley toward the southern highlands, it is well to stop for a moment at the wonderful little gorge of Newton Upper Falls, where the river cuts its way through ledges clothed with hemlocks.\* The narrow stream flows swift and dark between quaintly broken rocks, and the great stone arch which bears the Sudbury River aqueduct leaps boldly across from bank to bank. Like the brook and the oaks at Waverley this is a spot of uncommon interest and beauty, which, because it lies within the bounds of three municipalities, can be preserved for the delight of the public only by some co-operative or metropolitan agency.

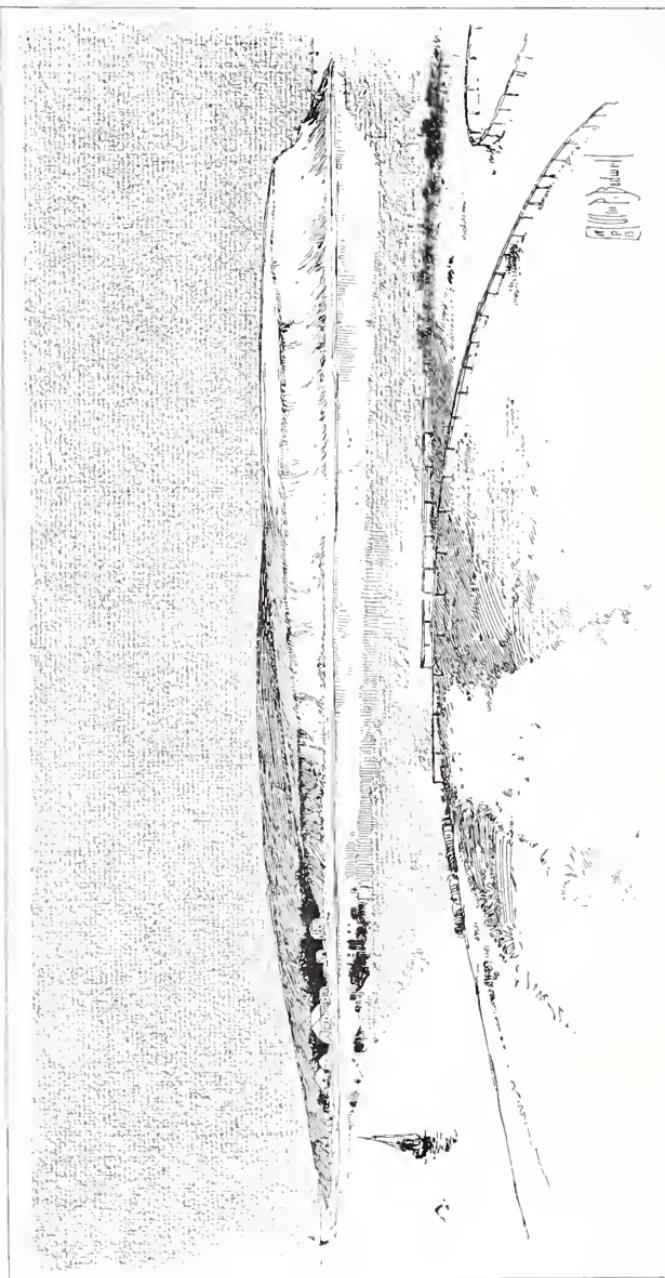
Where Charles River makes its great bend in Dedham we leave the stream in order to discover the southern counterpart of the Fells. As Bear Hill in Stoneham is eight miles north north-west from the State House and three hundred and twenty-five feet high, so Bellevue Hill in West Roxbury is seven miles south south-west and of practically the same elevation. The growing suburbs of West Roxbury, Dedham and Hyde Park surround it, and town streets are even now climbing its slopes; but, on the Hyde Park side, there still remains a large area of exceedingly rough and steep land, in the midst of which is concealed a low-lying pool called Muddy Pond.† From the summit of Bellevue, whence the sea is in full view, to the shore of this pond is half a mile, but the descent is more than two hundred feet. Half-way down, if we pause for a moment on the Dedham turnpike, or on one of the many jutting

---

\* See illustration No. 19.

† See illustration No. 21.



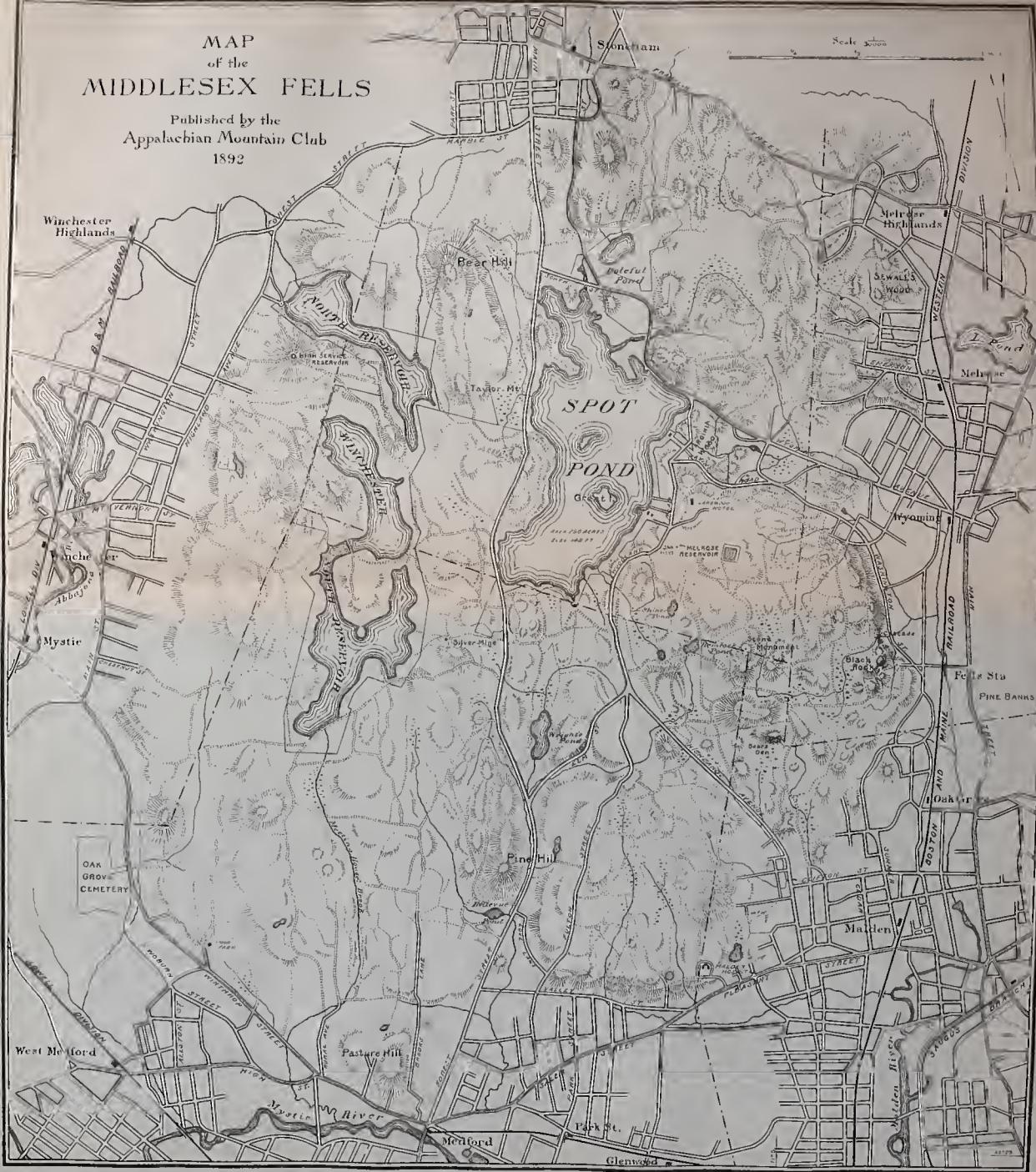


29. PEDDOCK'S ISLAND, FROM POINT PEMBERTON.

MAP  
of the  
**MIDDLESEX FELLS**

Published by the  
Appalachian Mountain Club  
1892

Scale 1:250,000





ledges of rock, we shall see over the pond, the pine woods of the valley, and the half-concealed town of Hyde Park, the range of the Blue Hills,—no longer the pale blue masses which we saw from Lynn Woods and the Fells, but near by and sharply cut.\* This striking view, the panorama from the hill-top, and the sheltered wildness of the deep valley of the pond, render Bellevue Hill with the Muddy Pond woods the most valuable open space now obtainable in this section of the metropolitan district. This is, however, another case for metropolitan action, for the boundary which divides Hyde Park from Boston also divides these woods.

Crossing the Neponset valley we at last reach the Blue Hills,—the “mountains” of the metropolitan district.† Although they extend hardly one-fourth the length of the northern range of rock-hills their average elevation is three times as great. So considerable a barrier do they present, that the railroads, the creators of suburbs, have avoided them entirely,—with the result that in all the five miles from the eastern base of Rattlesnake Hill to the western foot of the Big Blue there are not yet a half-dozen buildings standing on the hills above the contour of two hundred feet. There are, indeed, in all this distance only two roads which cross the range. From end to end the wilderness is still practically continuous. The hunting of foxes and raccoons is still carried on in it. Its separated hills are far larger, if no bolder, than the others we have seen. The notches or passes between the hills are often deep and steep-sided, and the views down the side valleys to the sea, or out over the seeming plain of south-eastern Massachusetts, are surprising and grand. It is true that the original forest was swept away years ago, and its substitute of oak and chestnut is a little monotonous; on the other hand the highest parts of all the hills are variously clothed with scrub oaks, cedars, pines and other toughest growths, while the many narrow and shady defiles shelter other species of their own, among them the mountain laurel, which is very rare near Boston. If the people of metropolitan Boston care to possess in common a park such as any king would be proud to call his own, a public forest possessed of vastly finer scenery than any of the great public woods of Paris can show, a recreation ground far surpassing in its refreshing value even London’s Epping Forest, they have only to possess themselves of the still cheap lands of the Blue Hills.

---

\* See illustration No. 20.

† See frontispiece.

Like the other highlands which have been mentioned these Hills stand wholly within the sweep of the eleven-mile radius from the State House. They lie south of Boston as the Lynn Woods lie north; and if it is well for the public to possess the northern reservation, it will be even better for it to own the grander southern heights.

Lastly, and speaking with reference to all the open spaces thus far mentioned, it only remains to point out that, once they are acquired, they need cost little for maintenance and nothing for improvement, at least for many years. They are all of a kind which, if forest fires are prevented, will take care of themselves. Moreover, their first cost need not at all alarm the taxpayers of the district. A study of valuations and acreage would seem to warrant an estimate that one million dollars will more than suffice to-day to purchase all the highlands herein named. In other words, there are needed only as many dollars as there are inhabitants of the metropolitan district. This being so, it ought not to be long before the combined action of the metropolitan population shall make the hills their own.

*The Ponds and Streams.*—When it comes to examining the little lakes and rivers of the metropolitan district their case is found to be different from that of the rock-hills. Population, which has everywhere avoided the heights, has, like the waters, settled in the valleys. Indeed most of the centres of suburban populations are crowded, like Hyde Park and Waltham, upon the very banks of streams. Thus at first sight it seems as if the proposed resumption of the banks by the public were already impracticable, if not impossible, so great must be the expenditure which the work of rescue must entail. On the other hand, as already pointed out, the advantages the whole community would reap from public ownership of the water ways are so many and great that the endeavor to secure them cannot be abandoned hastily or without a careful study of the facts and the possibilities.

The streams as they flow through the district on their way to the sea must, therefore, next be followed; and for this purpose the Mystic, Charles and Neponset had better be taken, rather than their more rural mates, the streams of Saugus and Weymouth.

The Abbajona, as the upper Mystic River is called in Winchester, is already by no means a clean stream; and yet, below the last of the tanneries which pollute it, the appearance of the winding rivulet and its banks is quite delightful, particularly where it passes under a quaint little bridge to find its outlet in the Upper





30. THE ROCKY SHORE AT NANTASKET AND COHASSET. Illustrating the consequences of private ownership of a picturesque coast.  
By permission of Charles Follock, Ladd & Tilton, Boston.

Mystic Lake. Here is a natural pond converted by a dam into a collecting reservoir of the Boston water works. Its shores are intricate in outline and attractively wooded, but much of this attractiveness may be destroyed at any time, for the city of Boston owns hardly anything more than the land under water. Below the dam the lower lake lies so low that its waters feel the ebb and flow of the tide. We are still eight miles in a straight line from the sea and in the mouth of one of the gaps in the northern range of rock-hills; yet just after the Mystic River has quitted this lower lake there appears a little flat of salt marsh upon either hand, and from this point to the river's mouth this green border of meadow is never absent. Down to Medford the marsh on the left bank is bounded by a fine tree-clad bluff of upland, from which some of the solid mansions of a hundred years ago still look southward across the sunny open of the river. At Cradock bridge buildings are crowded to the water's edge, and just below the bridge is the head of navigation, where ships were built while there was still ship timber in the Fells, and where now an occasional schooner discharges a freight of coal, lime or lumber. From the lower wharf the view southeastward and Boston-ward includes what seems an ever-widening salt marsh, through which the channel winds in broadening loops, one of which swings out of the sunlight of the meadows into the shadow of the steep Winter Hill of Somerville. Three or four manufacturing concerns, of the sort which require cheap lands and no near neighbors, have set up buildings on the marsh; but there is no considerable settlement upon the river bank until after the lesser Malden River has entered from the north and the long railroad bridges have been passed. Here the channel becomes deep enough to float considerable vessels, and a huge chemical factory and many coal "pockets" are seen. Thus far, excepting for a short distance near Cradock bridge, there is really nothing to prevent the reservation of the banks for public use; and ultimately, though perhaps many years hence, the construction of a river road which would provide the pleasantest possible route to Boston from Medford, Arlington and Winchester and all the towns beyond. Below the railroad bridges commerce should undoubtedly possess the river; so that travellers by the river road, if bound to Boston, will have to make their way through Charlestown, or over that boulevard terminating in Haymarket Square, which the consolidation of the railroads will make it possible to lay out, approximately on the present location of the old Boston & Maine line.

If, on the other hand, the traveller from up the river is bent on pleasure and desires to drive to the sea, it will not be difficult to provide him with an easy and pleasant way crossing Malden River near its mouth, passing by the head of Island End Creek and so down Snake Creek and by a branch of Belle Isle Creek to the southern end of Revere Beach.\* This route will bring the ocean beach within six and one-half miles of Cradock bridge, Medford, within seven miles of Harvard Square, Cambridge, and within correspondingly short distances of many other places whose inhabitants at present never think of driving to the sea because of the miles of pavement which must be traversed on the way.

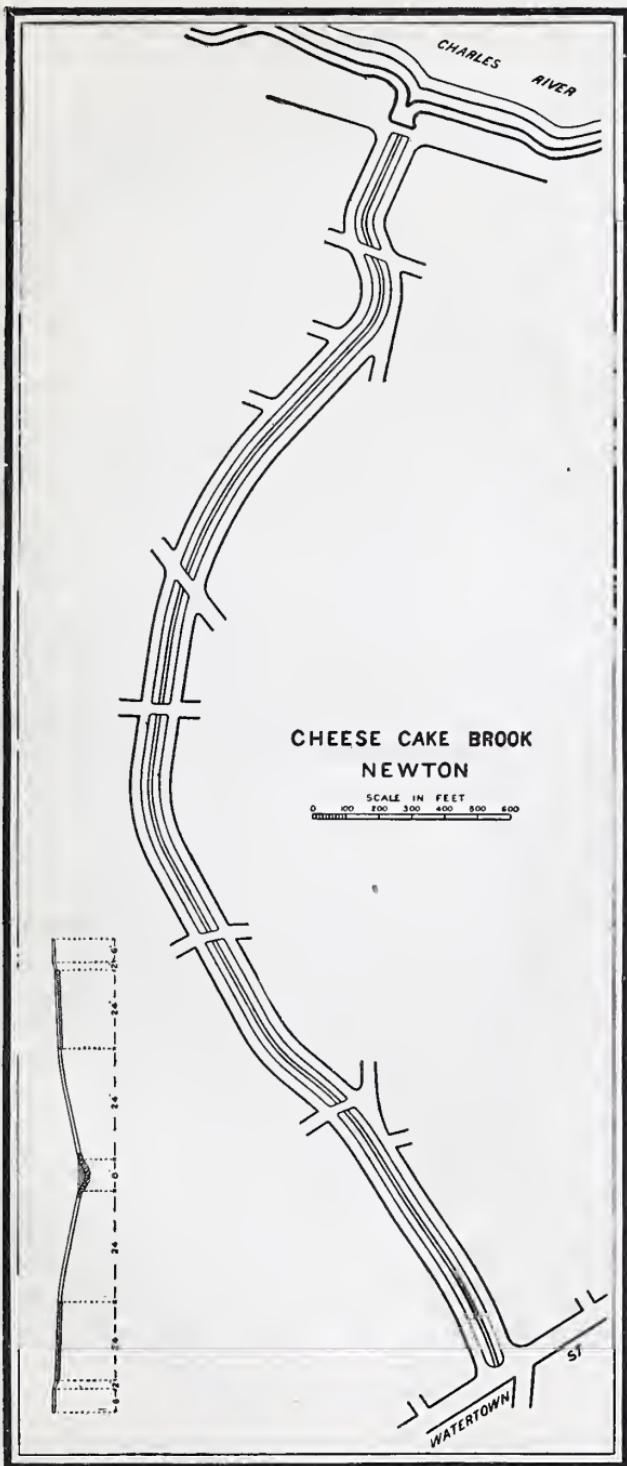
Doubtless the feasibility of reserving so continuous an open space will largely depend upon the temper of the owners of the river lands. If they can see their own advantage, the needed reservation will be obtained almost as soon as a metropolitan parks board can be created. If, however, for any reason the continuous space should prove out of the question, the metropolitan board should at all events possess itself of the valley and mouth of Island End Creek,† which lies within the bounds of Chelsea and Everett and is the only space which now remains convenient to the populations of those two growing cities.

Proceeding now to Waltham, Charles River should be followed in its course through the very middle of the metropolitan district. As far as Watertown the stream is of fresh water, flowing tranquilly through lowlands. A few large mills are seated on its banks, but outside of the closely built parts of Waltham and Watertown the shores are generally quite free from buildings. Half-way between the towns is the mouth of Cheesc-Cake Brook, where the city of Newton is practically illustrating the treatment which, with local modifications, should be applied to all the larger waterways of the district as soon as the lands about them are demanded for building purposes. Instead of covering the stream with back yards or a street, the watercourse is placed in an open strip of grassy or bushy ground, upon each side of which is constructed a roadway affording access to houses built facing the stream. In this way three results are brought about at once. The pollution of the stream is effectually prevented, a handsome thoroughfare is created, and the value of adjacent real estate is so enhanced that it much more than makes good the subtraction of the brook

---

\* See illustrations Nos. 9 and 10.

† See illustration No. 8.

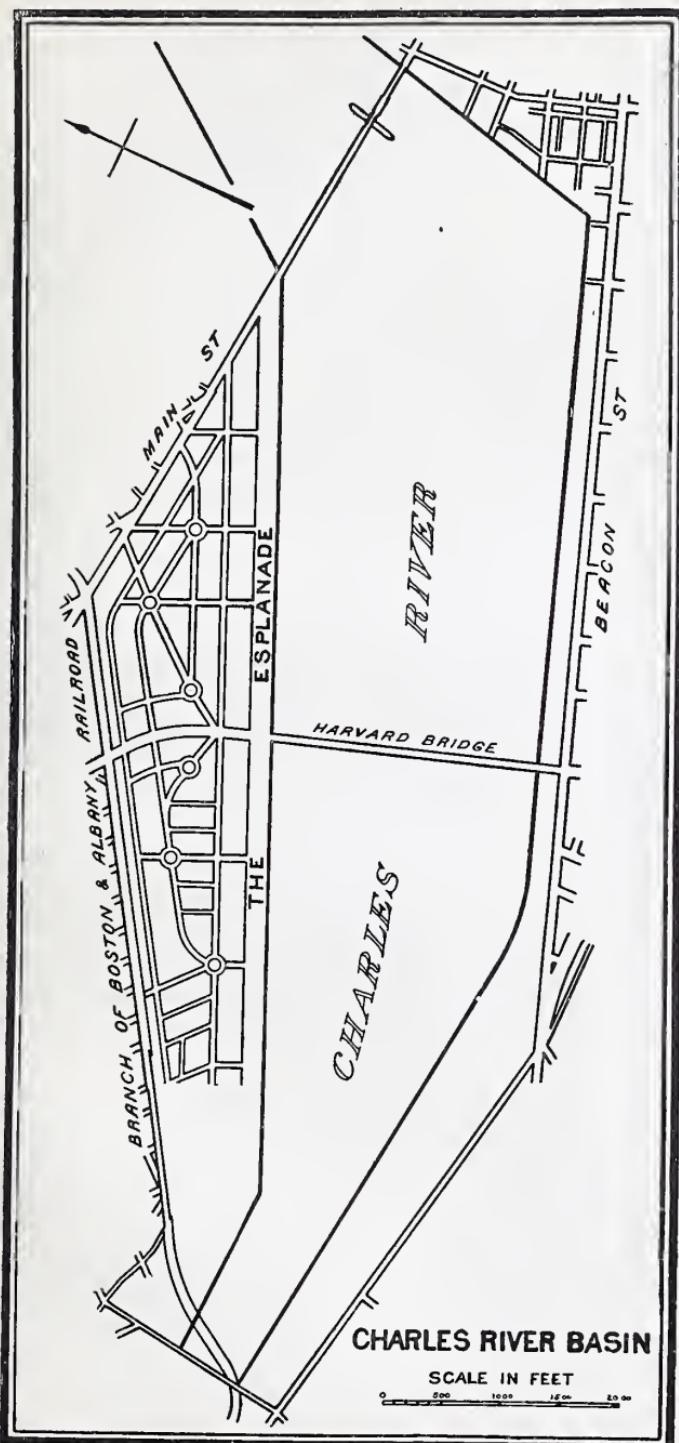


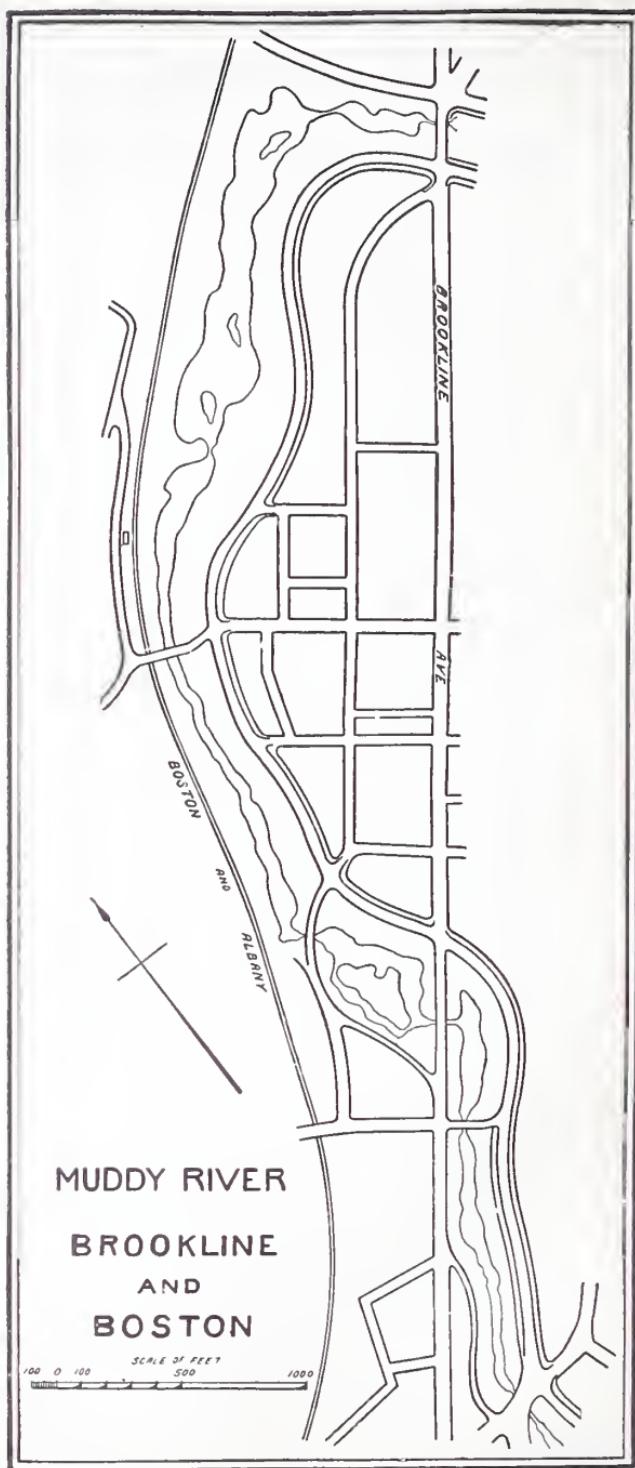
banks which have been given to the public. The treasury of the city of Newton will soon be more than reimbursed by the increase of the taxable values along the stream.

Below the dam at Watertown Charles River is salt, and bordered by salt marshes backed by more or less distant uplands. Out of a total length of sixteen miles of bank, from Watertown bridge to Craigie bridge and back again, almost four miles are already controlled by public or semi-public agencies. Among the rest the United States Arsenal, the Cambridge Cemetery, the Corporation of Harvard College and the city of Boston all own long frontages, — a part of Boston's river front has already become a popular promenade and playground, known as the Charlesbank. Moreover, the percentage of the remaining frontage occupied by costly structures is very small. Most of the marginal proprietors are still at liberty to do what they choose with their own. It must be evident to them that the use of the river for shipping purposes is almost at an end. Navigation by masted vessels cannot be continued much longer, because of the intolerable interruption to traffic caused by the opening of the draws of the crowded bridges. This being admitted, the question arises whether the most profit will in the end be reaped by offering the river lands to the builders of factories and slums, or by drawing to them the builders of good private and apartment houses. One numerous body of marsh and flat owners has already staked its money on the belief that the most profit is to be derived from the last-named method of procedure. Acting on this conviction the Charles River Embankment Company has given<sup>\*</sup> the city of Cambridge a riverside esplanade two hundred feet wide and five thousand feet long, in the rear of which it is building a series of fine streets which converge upon Harvard bridge. In Watertown another company of landowners is about to lay out a large tract of riverside upland upon a similar, though a more rural, plan. In Boston around the so-called Fens, and in Brookline and Boston along the improved Muddy River,\* real estate is already reaping the advantages arising from the successful conversion of a damaging nuisance into a profit-making attraction. What has been done in these last-named places can gradually be done in less expensive ways along Charles River whenever a metropolitan commission, free to act in several cities and towns, shall be empowered to co-operate with the local

---

\* See diagram on page 104.





landowners in pushing forward a work which cannot fail to profit both the landowners and the public.

For the descent of our third river—the Neponset—the start should be made from Dedham. A small tributary of the Neponset, called Mother Brook, has here been artificially supplied by means of a canal with an overflow of water from the meandering Charles, so that we find a good canoe stream, which, in the course of two charming miles, brings us among the factories of the town of Hyde Park. The brook flows crookedly between high banks of trees in a valley surprisingly little injured by the occasional factories which use the water power. The mills are still half concealed by trees and by the very narrowness and crookedness of the valley. In some parts there are already brookside roads having fringes of trees between them and the water. In other parts the banks afford beautiful views down the descending valley to the Great Blue Hill and its mates. On the other hand, in Hyde Park, where the brook joins the river, we have a striking exhibition of the abuse of streams. The river is here a sewer, and its bank a rubbish dump and continuous back yard.

Passing through Mattapan to the head of the tide at the foot of Milton Hill several long-established factories are met, but no very evil places. Along most of the way the banks are beautifully fringed with trees and bushy thickets,\* and in some parts the desirable river roads already exist. At length, with a rush between two great brick chocolate mills, the fresh water river makes a sudden turn, and, sweeping around a last pine-clad point, flows out to join the tide of the salt marshes. Just here is one of the most picturesque spots in the whole neighborhood of Boston, and one which well illustrates the fact that the evidences of human industry, such as the wharves, sheds and schooners which here are mixed with trees and rocks, may often be very helpful to the effectiveness of scenery.

The marshes bordering our river from this point to the lower bridge are framed with woods and especially adorned by two wooded knolls or islands. As yet there is not a single building to mar the beauty of their open levels, the best view of which is had from near the Neponset bridge, where the oak islands, Milton Hill and the Great Blue Hill, looming in the distance, compose a quiet landscape such as is hardly to be found elsewhere within our

---

\* See illustration No. 24.

district.\* Beyond, on the way to Squantum, are two striking rocky knolls covered with dark cedars and surrounded by the marsh, and then a winding marsh road is traversed, scarcely raised above the level of the waters of the bay, which now appear on either hand.

As the ocean at Revere Beach was reached by a ten-mile drive from Winchester down the valley of Mystic River, so now the bay shore at Squaw Rock is reached by a ten-mile drive from Dedham down the lovelier valley of the Neponset. Half-way between these northern and southern riverways we find Charles River, leading, by another course of ten miles, from Waltham through the very centre of the metropolitan district to the basin just west of the State House. Nature appears to have placed these streams just where they can best serve the needs of the crowded populations gathering fast about them. Moreover, if action is taken quickly to establish an executive body charged with the duty of defending and asserting the interest of the whole community in the right treatment of these rivers, there will not be found to be any very great difficulty in acquiring, in some parts that public ownership of the banks, and in other parts that simple right of way, which is all that is essential at present. The self-interest of the river landowners, and the self-interest of the separate river towns, will conspire to assist such a new board in its work. A great benefit to the public would practically be assured from the start.

There remains one other kind of inland open space of more than local yet of not such general value as the rivers,—the ponds of the district, about which, as in the case of the rivers, there ought generally to be a protecting public way, even if it be no more than a footpath. Here again the intelligent interest of speculative land-owners will in time effect something,—the more quickly if such private interest can be encouraged by a board officially representing the public interest in such works. What can be done is well illustrated at Lake Quannapowitt,† where a public road follows a tree-fringed shore for more than a mile, and gives access to the boating which the lake affords. Most of the ponds are, however, too small for boating; so that those who take pleasure in that sport make use of the Charles River between Waltham and Dedham,—a part of the river thus far omitted because, for the purposes of this report, it is to be regarded as one long pond.

---

\* See illustration No. 26.

† See illustration No. 4.



31. NANTASKET BEACH, HULL. By permission of Charles Pollock, Hamilton Place, Boston.



From Waltham to Newton Lower Falls the stream is still idyllic in its beauty, though threatened here and there by monstrous ugliness. Hundreds of persons from Boston and many other parts of the district are to be found here every pleasant afternoon in summer. In all this district there is no other place where quiet boating in such surroundings can be had.\*

Must all this beauty of the upper river, with all its valuable opportunities for recreation, be destroyed? The town of Brookline and the cities of Newton and Waltham draw their water supplies from this valley; and for the protection of those supplies they already own between Waltham and Dedham some six out of a total of twenty miles of river bank. They ought to own much more; and as in the Fells a metropolitan commission might do the public great service by joining the domains of the various water boards, so here upon the Charles River the same body might likewise do much for the public by encouraging further purchases, by accepting the charge of gifts of lands, and by showing the landowners and the towns the many dangers both to health and to property which the continued private ownership of the banks will entail.

*The Bay and the Sea.* — As already seen, about one-fourth of the whole area swept by a radius of fifteen miles from the State House is occupied by the bay and the open ocean. Here, accordingly, is Boston's one great "open space," whence comes her famous east wind with many another blessing in disguise. Most of the sheltered bay is shallow, yet sufficiently deep for pleasure craft of small tonnage, some eight hundred of which are owned in the metropolitan district,—many more than can be counted in any other harbor of the Atlantic coast, not excepting the grand bay of New York. In summer the channels among the islands are sometimes fairly thronged with crafts, among which pass the pleasure steamers which daily carry thousands to the fine seashore of Nantasket or Nahant.

Viewing these pleasant scenes of healthful recreation it is a delight to think that all is as it should be, that here at last is a section of the district where nature has supplied the people with the best sort of a park,—an inalienable pleasure ground such as cannot be enclosed for private use, cannot be damaged and cannot be improved. Yet, if this is the first thought the second is of ominous tenor. True is it that the waters cannot but remain free to all; but can the same be said of the shores?

---

\* See illustrations Nos. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19.

Upon inquiry it will be learned that of all the ocean shore of the metropolitan district only Nahant Beach, which is a highway, belongs to the public. Even within the bay the public holdings are but few. To be sure, most of the islands belong either to the United States or to the city of Boston, but they are used for forts, reformatories, hospitals and poorhouses. They might easily be clothed with foliage,\* to the great improvement of the scenery of the bay, but they cannot well be given over to the use of the general public. On the bay shore of the mainland only the city of Boston owns any public spaces, these being Wood Island at East Boston, the Marine Park and the Old Harbor Parkway at South Boston, and the main drainage reservations at the Cow Pasture, Squaw Rock and Moon Island. Everybody recognizes the value of these bayside spaces, they are more popular than any of the other great works of the Boston park commission, they point the way by which a metropolitan parks commission may at once win public favor and support.

Boston has now done nearly all that can be done upon the shore within her limits. If the public is to own any of the ocean front and any more of the bay shore, divided as both are among many towns and cities, it can only be through the encouraging and helping activity of a metropolitan parks commission. And when such a commission is established, what should be its first work upon the shore? The answer is,—the acquirement of the title to the foreshore and the beach from Winthrop Great Head to the Point of Pines. Winthrop Head stands almost due east from the State House, and looks eastward and seaward half-way between the promontories of Nahant and Hull.† Between it and Grover's Cliff the beach is already owned in common by the proprietors of the crowded houses on its crest. Grover's Cliff is the property of the United States. It is only along Revere Beach that difficulty will be encountered in securing free public access to the shore. The present condition of this fine beach is a disgrace.‡ Two railroads and a highway have been built upon it, without regard to either the safety and convenience of the public or the development of the highest real-estate values. The railroads cared only for a location which would enable them to use the beach as an attraction to draw passengers. No account was taken

---

\* Compare illustrations Nos. 28 and 29.

† See illustration No. 11.

‡ See illustration No. 12.

of the fact that swarms of people must induce a demand for buildings, and so the buildings have had to find sites where best they could, generally between the highway and the sea. A thorough reformation is called for here, in the interest not only of the general public but also of the beach proprietors and the treasury of Revere. The real interests of the railroads demand a proper arrangement of the beach. Its capabilities as a place of residence, equipped with a broad esplanade and drive, and lined with houses and hotels facing the south-east and the sea, are as yet not understood; \* nevertheless, the time is coming when they will be understood, and when that public control of the shore which can now be brought about at comparatively little cost will be appreciated at its worth.

#### CONCLUSION.

The circuit of the rock-hills, the streams and the shores of the district has now been completed, and it only remains to add a few words of general application.

In proposing the acquisition of the particular spaces named, I have been influenced by nothing but my view of the public needs and my estimate of the district's financial powers. That the proposed open areas lie so symmetrically within the district, Lynn Woods mating with the Blue Hills, the Fells with Muddy Pond, the Oaks with the Hemlock Gorge and the Mystic River with the Neponset, is due to nature.

As to the bounds of the proposed areas, I have not attempted to define them with precision. When the time comes, they should in every case be so placed that the street departments of the several towns and cities may find it easy to construct roads immediately adjacent to the boundaries and continuous therewith. Doubtless in many places the abutting landowners will give the lands which may be needed for such roads in view of the advantages their property will derive therefrom.

In conclusion, it may be well to point out that the cost of the maintenance of all the metropolitan open spaces need not, for many years at least, exceed the expense of guarding them from forest fires and other forms of depredation; on the other hand, if the community should wish to clean the streams, build paths or

---

\* See illustration No. 13.

roads, or do any other proper work within the reservations, it would find in the Parks Commission an instrument to do its bidding.

I desire, before closing, to express my thanks to the engineers and clerks of the towns and cities of the district for the information which many of them have kindly furnished.

CHARLES ELIOT.

726 EXCHANGE BUILDING, BOSTON, Jan. 2, 1893.

## NOTES ON THE MAP.

---

This map represents the neighborhood of Boston on a scale of a trifle more than one mile to each inch,—a scale to which the people of the United States are now accustomed, because it is used by the national geological survey for all its maps of the populous regions of the country. The contour lines of the map are copied from the original sheets in the office of the State topographical survey. It should be said that they are but roughly sketched and inaccurate in many places; nevertheless, they display the general form of the surface and the relative elevation of different parts of the district in a manner not otherwise possible. The rock-hills, the rounded drumlins, the wandering streams, the marshes, the salt creeks and the wave-built beaches of the coast are all clearly brought out.

Principal highways and those traversed by street railways are shown upon this map by double lines; all other streets and roads by single lines. Where streets are built upon filled flats or marshes the black street lines are printed over the marsh color; the great extent of the low and filled lands is thus indicated at a glance.

Railroads are shown by the usual convention, and the crossings of the streets are distinguished according as they are overhead, underneath or at one grade.

Existing commons, squares, parks and other open spaces reserved for public recreation or for the protection of water supplies, and having an area of two acres or more, are printed in green, and numbered to correspond with the key on the next page.

Open spaces suggested in the landscape architect's report are colored buff. As stated in the report, the boundaries of these spaces have not been studied in detail; if they had been the small scale of the map would preclude showing them. The scale of the map has likewise made it necessary to print the buff color along the streams and in some other parts without regard to those special parcels of real estate, such as cemeteries, churches, established mills and the like, which a metropolitan commission would hardly think of buying, since agreements made with their owners would in most cases accomplish all that is essential.





# KEY TO FIGURES ON THE MAP.

OPEN SPACES.	CONTROLLED BY	OPEN SPACES.	CONTROLLED BY
1. Boston Common . . . .	Boston Department of Public Grounds.	54. Farlow Park . . . . .	Newton Department of Public Grounds.
2. Public Garden . . . .	Boston Department of Public Grounds.	55. Playground . . . . .	Newton Department of Public Grounds.
3. Commonwealth Avenue	Boston Department of Public Grounds.	56. River Park, Weston . . .	Weston Selectmen.
4. Charlesbank . . . .	Boston Park Commission.	57. Auburndale Park . . . .	Newton Department of Public Grounds.
5. Back Bay Fens . . . .	Boston Park Commission.	58. River Park, Auburndale . . .	Newton Department of Public Grounds.
6. Blackstone Square . . .	Boston Department of Public Grounds.	59. Cambridge Water Reserve . . .	Cambridge Water Board.
7. Franklin Square . . . .	Boston Department of Public Grounds.	60. Waltham Water Works . . .	Waltham Water Board.
8. Monument Square . . .	Bunker Hill Monument Association.	61. Waltham Common . . . .	Waltham Department of Public Grounds.
9. Charlestown Heights . .	Boston Park Commission.	62. Watertown Common . . . .	Watertown Selectmen.
10. Playground . . . . .	Boston Park Commission.	63. United States Arsenal . . .	National Government.
11. Wood Island Park . . .	Boston Park Commission.	64. Fresh Pond Reservoir . . .	Cambridge Water Board.
12. Commonwealth Park . .	Boston Department of Public Grounds.	65. Cambridge Common . . . .	Cambridge Department of Public Grounds.
13. Telegraph Hill . . . .	Boston Department of Public Grounds.	66. Broadway Common . . . .	Cambridge Department of Public Grounds.
14. Independence Square . .	Boston Department of Public Grounds.	67. The Esplanade . . . . .	Cambridge Department of Public Grounds.
15. Marine Park . . . . .	Boston Park Commission.	68. Central Hill Park . . . .	Somerville Department of Public Grounds.
16. Castle Island . . . . .	Boston Park Commission.	69. Broadway Park . . . . .	Somerville Department of Public Grounds.
17. Rogers Park . . . . .	Boston Department of Public Grounds.	70. Powder House Park . . . .	Somerville Department of Public Grounds.
18. Chestnut Hill Reservoir	Boston Water Board.	71. Mystic Reservoir . . . . .	Boston Water Board.
19. Playground . . . . .	Brookline Selectmen.	72. Mystic Water Works . . .	Boston Water Board.
20. Playground . . . . .	Brookline Selectmen.	73. Arlington Heights . . . .	Arlington Selectmen.
21. Playground . . . . .	Brookline Selectmen.	74. Arlington Water Reserve .	Arlington Water Board.
22. Muddy River Parkway .	Boston and Brookline Park Commissions.	75. Lexington Common . . . .	Lexington Selectmen.
23. Old Brookline Reservoir	Boston Water Board.	76. Boston Water Reserve . . .	Boston Water Board.
24. Brookline Reservoir . .	Brookline Water Board.	77. Winchester Common . . .	Winchester Selectmen.
25. Fisher Hill Reservoir .	Boston Water Board.	78. Woburn Park . . . . .	Woburn Park Commission.
26. Madison Square . . . .	Boston Department of Public Grounds.	79. Winchester Water Reserve .	Winchester Water Board.
27. Orchard Park . . . . .	Boston Department of Public Grounds.	80. Bear Hill Park . . . . .	Stoneham Park Commission.
28. Parker Hill Reservoir .	Boston Water Board.	81. Melrose, Malden and Medford Water Reserve . . .	Joint Water Board.
29. Highland Park . . . . .	Boston Department of Public Grounds.	82. Medford Water Reserve . .	Medford Water Board.
30. Washignton Park . . .	Boston Department of Public Grounds.	83. Virginia Wood . . . . .	Trustees of Public Reservations.
31. Fountain Square . . . .	Boston Department of Public Grounds.	84. Playground . . . . .	Stoneham Selectmen.
32. Jamaica Pond . . . . .	Boston Park Commission.	85. Wakefield Common . . . .	Wakefield Selectmen.
33. Arnold Arboretum . . .	Boston Park Commission.	86. Lake Park . . . . .	Wakefield Selectmen.
34. Franklin Park . . . . .	Boston Park Commission.	87. Sewall's Wood . . . . .	Melrose Park Commission.
35. Franklin Field . . . . .	Boston Park Commission.	88. Eastern Common . . . .	Melrose Park Commission.
36. Dorchester Park . . . .	Boston Park Commission.	89. Waitt's Mount . . . . .	Malden Water Board.
37. Squaw Rock . . . . .	Boston Improved Sewerage Department.	90. Malden Water Works . . .	Malden Water Board.
38. Moon Island . . . . .	Boston Improved Sewerage Department.	91. Chelsea Common . . . .	Chelsea Department of Public Grounds.
39. Merrymount Park . . .	Quincy Park Commission.	92. United States Marine and Naval Hospitals . . .	National Government.
40. Faxon Park . . . . .	Quincy Park Commission.	93. United States Battery . .	National Government.
41. Quincy Water Reserve .	Quincy Water Board.	94. United States Battery . .	National Government.
42. French's Common . . .	Braintree Selectmen.	95. Lynn Common . . . . .	Lynn Park Commission.
43. Webb Park . . . . .	Weymouth Park Commission.	96. Lynn Woods . . . . .	Lynn Park Commission.
44. Beals Park . . . . .	Weymouth Park Commission.	97. Lynn Water Reserve . . .	Lynn Water Board.
45. Hull Common . . . . .	Hull Park Commission.	98. Meadow Park . . . . .	Lynn Park Commission.
46. Dedham Common . . . .	Dedham Selectmen.	99. Oceanside Terrace . . . .	Lynn Park Commission.
47. Boston Parental School Grounds . . . . .	Trustees.	100. Nahant Long Beach . . .	Nahant Selectmen.
48. Brookline Water Works	Brookline Water Board.	101. Nahant Short Beach . . .	Nahant Selectmen.
49. Brookline Water Reserve	Brookline Water Board.	102. Devereux Beach . . . .	Marblehead Selectmen.
50. Brookline Water Reserve	Brookline Water Board.	103. Marblehead Park . . . .	Marblehead Park Commission.
51. Newton Water Reserve	Newton Water Board.	104. Crocker Rock . . . . .	Marblehead Park Commission.
52. Needham Common . . .	Needham Selectmen.	105. Fort Sewall . . . . .	Marblehead Selectmen.
53. Waban Hill Reservoir .	Newton Water Board.	106. Fort Glover . . . . .	Marblehead Selectmen.

MAP  
OF THE  
METROPOLITAN DISTRICT  
OF  
BOSTON  
MASSACHUSETTS

Showing the existing public reservations  
and estates.

OPEN SPACES

as now proposed by Charles Eliot Landscape Architect  
under contract to the

Metropolitan Park Commission

Boston January 29 1899



s  
l  
v  
a  
c  
a  
a  
o  
a  
n  
d  
d  
u  
s  
p  
e  
a  
a  
a  
a  
d  
c  
s  
a  
c  
c  
e  
l  
l  
e  
r  
o  
o  
e  
l  
l  
e  
r  
e  
v  
e  
o  
r  
r  
r

---

---

## APPENDICES.

---

---



[ A. ]

Draft for an Act recommended by the Metropolitan Park Commission.

## Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

---

In the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Ninety-three.

---

### AN ACT

To establish a Metropolitan Parks Commission.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. The governor by and with the  
2 advice and consent of the council shall appoint  
3 five persons, who shall constitute a board to be  
4 known as the Metropolitan Parks Commission.  
5 The members of this board shall hold office re-  
6 spectively for the terms of one year, two years,  
7 three years, four years and five years, beginning  
8 with the first Monday in May, 1893; and annually  
9 thereafter the governor shall appoint as aforesaid  
10 one such commissioner to hold office for the term  
11 of five years beginning with the first Monday in  
12 May in the year of his appointment; and if any  
13 vacancy occurs in said board by resignation or  
14 otherwise the governor shall in like manner

15 appoint one or more commissioners for the residue  
16 of the term, and may also remove any commis-  
17 sioner. The members of said board shall serve  
18 without compensation, but their travelling and  
19 other necessary expenses shall be allowed and  
20 paid; and no person employed by the board shall  
21 be a member thereof.

1    SECT. 2. Said board shall annually choose  
2 one of its members chairman, and may from time  
3 to time appoint a clerk or secretary, and such  
4 other employees as it deems necessary to carry  
5 out the purposes of this act: it may determine  
6 the duties and compensation of such appointees;  
7 remove the same at pleasure, and make all  
8 reasonable rules and regulations. Said board  
9 shall have a suitable office, where its maps, plans,  
10 documents, records and accounts shall be kept,  
11 subject to public inspection at such times as  
12 the board may determine. On or before the first  
13 Wednesday in February in each year, said board  
14 shall make a report of its proceedings to the  
15 General Court, together with a full statement of  
16 its receipts and disbursements.

1    SECT. 3. The jurisdiction and powers of said  
2 board shall extend to and may be exercised in the  
3 cities of Boston, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett,  
4 Lynn, Malden, Medford, Newton, Quincy,  
5 Somerville, Waltham and Woburn, and in the  
6 towns of Arlington, Belmont, Braintree, Brook-

7 line, Canton, Dedham, Hingham, Hull, Hyde  
8 Park, Melrose, Milton, Nahant, Needham, Revere,  
9 Saugus, Stoneham, Swampscott, Wakefield,  
10 Watertown, Wellesley, Weston, Weymouth,  
11 Winchester and Winthrop; which cities and  
12 towns shall constitute the Metropolitan Parks  
13 District.

1    SECT. 4. Said board shall have power to  
2 acquire, maintain and make available to the  
3 inhabitants of said district open spaces for exercise  
4 and recreation; and to this end, acting so far as  
5 may be in consultation with the proper local  
6 boards, shall be authorized to take, in fee or  
7 otherwise, in the name and for the benefit of the  
8 Commonwealth, by purchase, gift, devise or  
9 eminent domain, lands and rights in land for  
10 public open spaces within said district, or to take  
11 bonds for the conveyance thereof; and to preserve  
12 and care for such public reservations, and also, in  
13 the discretion of said board and upon such terms  
14 as it may approve, such other open spaces within  
15 said district as may be entrusted, given or  
16 devised to said board or to the Commonwealth  
17 by the United States, or by cities, towns, cor-  
18 porations or individuals for the general purposes  
19 of this act or for any one or more of such purposes  
20 as the donor may designate: *provided, however,*  
21 that no private property taken for the purpose  
22 of this act shall be taken under the right of eminent  
23 domain without the concurrence of a majority of

24 the board. In furtherance of the powers herein  
25 granted said board may employ a suitable police  
26 force, make rules and regulations for the govern-  
27 ment and use of the public reservations under  
28 their care, and for breaches thereof affix penalties  
29 not exceeding twenty dollars for one offence, to  
30 be imposed by any court of competent jurisdiction;  
31 and in general may do all acts needful for the  
32 proper execution of the powers and duties granted  
33 to and imposed upon said board by the terms of  
34 this act. Said board shall also have power to  
35 expend such funds, whether principal or income,  
36 as may be given in trust as provided for in the  
37 following section.

1     SECT. 5. The treasurer and receiver-general  
2 of the Commonwealth is hereby authorized and  
3 empowered with the approval of the governor and  
4 council, to receive and hold in trust for the  
5 Commonwealth, exempt from taxation, any grant  
6 or devise of lands or rights in land and any gift  
7 or bequest of money or other personal prop-  
8 erty made for the purposes of this act, and shall  
9 preserve and invest the proceeds thereof in notes  
10 or bonds secured by good and sufficient mort-  
11 gage or other securities. Said trust property  
12 shall be known as the "Metropolitan Parks Trust  
13 Fund," and shall be used and expended under the  
14 direction of the Metropolitan Parks Commission,  
15 and subject to its orders.

1    SECT. 6. Any city or town within said district,  
2 or any local board of such city or town, with the  
3 latter's consent, is hereby authorized and empow-  
4 ered to transfer the care and control of any open  
5 space owned or controlled by it, to the Metro-  
6 politan Parks Commission, upon such terms and  
7 for such period as may be mutually agreed upon;  
8 or to enter into an agreement with said com-  
9 mission for the joint care or preservation of open  
10 spaces within or adjacent to such city or town:  
11 and the Metropolitan Parks Commission may in  
12 like manner transfer the care and control of any  
13 open space controlled by it to any local board of  
14 a city or town within the said district, with the  
15 consent of such city or town, and upon such  
16 terms and for such period as may be mutually  
17 agreed upon.

1    SECT. 7. Said board shall estimate and deter-  
2 mine as near as may be all damages sustained by  
3 any person or corporation by the taking of land,  
4 or right therein, under this act; but any one  
5 aggrieved by such determination of the board  
6 may have damages assessed by a jury of the  
7 superior court in the same manner as is provided  
8 by law with respect to damages sustained by  
9 reason of the laying out of ways. If upon trial  
10 damages are increased beyond the award of the  
11 board the aggrieved party shall recover costs,  
12 otherwise such party shall pay costs; and costs  
13 shall be taxed as in civil cases: but no suit for

14 such damages shall be brought after the expiration  
15 of two years from the date of the recording  
16 of the taking, as required by the following section.

1    SECT. 8. Within sixty days after any land, or  
2 right therein, is acquired or taken under this act,  
3 the board shall file and cause to be recorded in  
4 the proper registry of deeds a description thereof  
5 sufficiently accurate for its identification, with a  
6 statement of the purpose for which the same is  
7 acquired or taken, which description shall be  
8 signed by a majority of said board.

1    SECT. 9. To meet the expenses incurred  
2 under the provisions of this act, the treasurer and  
3 receiver-general shall, with the approval of the  
4 governor and council, issue scrip or certificates  
5 of debt in the name and behalf of the Commonwealth  
6 wealth and under its seal to an amount not  
7 exceeding one million dollars, for a term not  
8 exceeding forty years. Said scrip or certificates  
9 of debt shall be issued as registered bonds  
10 or with interest coupons attached, and shall  
11 bear interest not exceeding four per cent. per  
12 annum, payable semi-annually on the first days  
13 of January and July in each year. Such scrip  
14 or certificates of debt shall be designated on the  
15 face as the Metropolitan Parks Loan; shall be  
16 countersigned by the governor, and shall be  
17 deemed a pledge of the faith and credit of the  
18 Commonwealth, redeemable at the time speci-

19 fied therein in gold coin of the United States,  
20 and shall be sold and disposed of at public  
21 auction, or in such other mode, and at such times  
22 and prices, and in such amounts and at such  
23 rates of interest not exceeding four per cent. per  
24 annum, as the governor and council shall deem  
25 best. The treasurer and receiver-general shall,  
26 on issuing any of said scrip or certificates of  
27 debt, establish a sinking fund, and apportion  
28 an amount to be paid thereto each year sufficient  
29 with its accumulations to extinguish the debt at  
30 maturity. Any premium realized on the sale of  
31 said scrip or certificates of debt shall be applied  
32 to the payment of the interest on said loan as it  
33 accrues.

1   SECT. 10. The supreme judicial court sitting  
2 in equity shall, on the application of said board  
3 and after notice to each of the cities and towns  
4 hereinbefore named, appoint three commissioners,  
5 who shall not be residents of such cities or towns,  
6 who shall, after due notice and hearing and in  
7 such manner as they shall deem just and equitable,  
8 determine the proportion in which each of such  
9 cities and towns shall annually pay money into  
10 the treasury of the Commonwealth for the term  
11 of five years next following the year of the first  
12 issue of said scrip or certificates, to meet the  
13 requirements of this act for each of said years,  
14 and shall return their award into said court; and  
15 when said award shall have been accepted by

16 said court the same shall be a final and conclusive  
17 adjudication of all matters herein referred to  
18 said commissioners and shall be binding on all  
19 parties. Said commissioners shall fix and return  
20 the proportion to be paid by the city of Boston  
21 for the first period of five years at fifty per cent.  
22 of the whole. Before the expiration of said term  
23 of five years and every five years thereafter three  
24 commissioners, who shall not be residents of  
25 any of the cities or towns constituting the  
26 Metropolitan Parks District, shall again be  
27 appointed as aforesaid, who shall in such manner  
28 as they deem just and equitable determine the  
29 proportion in which each of said cities and towns  
30 shall annually pay money into the treasury of the  
31 Commonwealth as aforesaid for the next succeed-  
32 ing term of five years, together with any deficiency  
33 in the amount previously paid in, as found by said  
34 treasurer, and shall return their award into said  
35 court; and when said award shall have been  
36 accepted by said court the same shall be a final  
37 and conclusive adjudication of all matters herein  
38 referred to said commissioners and shall be bind-  
39 ing on all parties.

1     SECT. 11. The Metropolitan Parks Commission  
2 shall annually estimate the expenses of preserva-  
3 tion and necessary care of said public reservations  
4 for the ensuing year, and certify the same to the  
5 treasurer, who shall apportion said expenses in  
6 the manner provided in the following section:

7 provided, however, that such expenses shall not  
8 exceed the sum of ten thousand dollars during  
9 the first year, nor exceed the sum of twenty  
10 thousand dollars during any succeeding year.

1 SECT. 12. The amount of money required each  
2 year from each city and town of the Metropolitan  
3 Parks District to meet the interest, sinking  
4 fund requirements and expenses aforesaid for  
5 each year, and deficiency, if any, shall be esti-  
6 mated by the treasurer of the Commonwealth  
7 in accordance with the proportion determined as  
8 aforesaid, and shall be included in and made a  
9 part of the sum charged to such city or town,  
10 and be assessed upon it in the apportionment  
11 and assessment of its annual state tax; and said  
12 treasurer shall in each year notify each city and  
13 town of the amount of such assessment, which  
14 amount shall be paid by the city or town into  
15 the treasury of the Commonwealth at the time  
16 required for the payment and as a part of its  
17 state tax.

1 SECT. 13. The supreme judicial court shall  
2 have jurisdiction in equity to enforce the pro-  
3 visions of this act, and shall fix and determine  
4 the compensation of all commissioners appointed  
5 by said court under the provisions hereof.

[ B.]

Draft for an Act recommended by the Secretary of the Metropolitan Park Commission.

## Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

---

In the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Ninety-three.

---

### AN ACT

In Addition to an Act for the Laying-out of Public Parks by Towns and Cities.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Any board of park commissioners  
2 constituted under the authority of chapter one  
3 hundred and fifty-four of the acts of eighteen  
4 hundred and eighty-two, as amended by chapter  
5 two hundred and forty of the acts of eighteen  
6 hundred and ninety, or of any special acts, shall  
7 have power to connect any public park, boulevard  
8 or driveway under its control with any part of  
9 any city or town in this Commonwealth wherein  
10 it has jurisdiction, by selecting and taking any  
11 connecting street or streets, or part thereof, lead-  
12 ing to such park, and shall also have power to  
13 accept and add to any such park any street or

14 part thereof which adjoins and runs parallel with  
15 any boundary line of the same: *provided*, that  
16 the consent of the public authorities having con-  
17 trol of any such street or streets so far as selected  
18 and taken, and also the consent in writing of  
19 the owners of a majority of the frontage of the  
20 lots and lands abutting on such street or streets  
21 so far as taken, shall be first obtained.

1    SECT. 2. Such board of park commissioners,  
2 or such public authorities as are by law authorized  
3 to levy taxes or assessments for the maintenance  
4 of such parks, shall have power to improve such  
5 street or streets as they may deem best, and for  
6 that purpose they are hereby authorized to pay  
7 for the improvement thereof, and from time to  
8 time to levy or cause to be levied and collected a  
9 special tax or assessment on contiguous property  
10 abutting upon such streets so improved, for a sum  
11 of money not exceeding the estimated cost of such  
12 first improvement or improvements as shall be  
13 ordered and estimated by such board of park  
14 commissioners, but not for any subsequent repairs  
15 thereof; and to that end such board or public  
16 authorities shall have all the power and authority  
17 now or hereafter granted to them, respectively,  
18 relative to the levy, assessment and collection of  
19 taxes or assessments for corporate purposes. And  
20 such special taxes or assessments as are hereby  
21 authorized may be divided into not exceeding  
22 four annual instalments, bearing interest at the

23 rate of six per cent. per annum from the date of  
24 confirmation until paid. And the said assess-  
25 ments or instalments thercof shall be collected  
26 and enforced in the same manner as is provided  
27 by law for the collection and enforcement of other  
28 taxes or assessments for, or on account of, such  
29 bodies or boards, so far as the same are applicable.

1 SECT. 3. Such park boards shall have the  
2 same power and control over the streets or parts  
3 of streets taken under this act as are, or may be,  
4 by the law vested in them of and concerning the  
5 parks, boulevards or driveways under their con-  
6 trol.

1 SECT. 4. In case any such streets or parts  
2 thercof shall pass from the control of any such  
3 park board, the power and authority over the  
4 same granted or authorized by this act shall  
5 revert to the proper corporate authorities of such  
6 city or town, respectively, as aforesaid.

1 SECT. 5. Any city or town shall have full  
2 power and authority to invest any of such park  
3 boards with the right to control, improve and  
4 maintain any of the streets of such city or town  
5 for the purpose of carrying out the provisions  
6 of this act.

1 SECT. 6. This act shall take effect upon its  
2 passage. .

[ C.]

Draft for an Act recommended by the Secretary of the Metropolitan Park Commission.

. Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

---

In the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Ninety-three.

---

AN ACT

To facilitate the procuring of Playgrounds by Cities  
and Towns.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives  
in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the  
same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Any city or town within the  
2 Commonwealth is hereby authorized and empow-  
3 ered to take land and rights in land, in fee or  
4 otherwise, within its limits by gift, purchase,  
5 eminent domain or otherwise, or to hire or lease  
6 the same for such period and at such annual ren-  
7 tal as may be agreed upon, and to hold, preserve  
8 and maintain such land as public playgrounds:  
9 *provided, however,* that no land shall be purchased,  
10 taken or hired for this purpose until an appropria-  
11 tion sufficient to cover the estimated expense  
12 thereof shall in a city have been made by the city  
13 council, or in a town by a legal town meeting.

14 When a park commission constituted under the  
15 laws of this Commonwealth exists or is hereafter  
16 established in a city or town, the powers and  
17 duties granted or imposed by this act shall be  
18 exercised through such park commission.

1   SECT. 2. The city or town or its park com-  
2 mission, as the case may be, shall estimate and  
3 determine as near as may be all damages sustained  
4 by any person or corporation by the taking of  
5 land or by other acts in execution of the powers  
6 herein granted; but any party aggrieved by such  
7 determination may have the damages assessed by  
8 a jury of the superior court in the same manner  
9 as is provided by law with respect to damages  
10 sustained by reason of the laying out of ways. If  
11 upon trial damages shall be increased beyond the  
12 award, the party shall recover costs; otherwise,  
13 he shall pay costs; and costs shall be taxed as in  
14 civil cases. Within sixty days after the taking of  
15 any land under this act, the city or town or park  
16 commission, as the case may be, shall file and cause  
17 to be recorded in the proper registry of deeds a  
18 description thereof sufficiently accurate for identi-  
19 fication; and no suit for damages shall be brought  
20 after the expiration of two years from the date of  
21 such recording.

1   SECT. 3. When the estimated expense of  
2 acquiring such land by purchase or eminent  
3 domain will, with any existing debt, cause the

4 debt of the city or town to exceed the debt limit  
5 now imposed by law, such city or town is hereby  
6 authorized to defray the expense by the issue of  
7 a bond or bonds, to an amount not exceeding one-  
8 half of one per cent. of the assessed valuation of  
9 said city or town, to run for such period and to be  
10 at such rate of interest as the city or town deems  
11 best; which bonds shall be known and designated  
12 on their face as the Play Ground Bonds of the  
13 city or town issuing them, and shall constitute a  
14 first mortgage lien on the land so acquired, in  
15 addition to the ordinary security afforded by the  
16 city or town; and in case of breach of condition  
17 of said mortgage bond or bonds, the mortgagee  
18 or mortgagees may foreclose in the usual manner.  
19 For the redemption of said Play Ground Bonds  
20 the city or town issuing the same may or may not  
21 establish a sinking fund.

[D.]

Draft for an Act recommended by the Secretary of the Metropolitan Park Commission.

## Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

---

In the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Ninety-three.

---

### AN ACT

To encourage the Building of Tenement-houses around Garden or Playground Spaces.

1 Whenever in any city of the Commonwealth,  
2 or in any town of the Metropolitan Parks Dis-  
3 trict of Boston, as defined in chapter —, Acts  
4 of 1893, tenement dwellings are built about  
5 enclosed spaces designed for garden and play-  
6 ground purposes, said enclosed spaces, upon the  
7 approval of the board of park commissioners of  
8 said city or town, or, in respect to the Metropol-  
9 itan Parks District of Boston, upon the approval  
10 of the Metropolitan Parks Commission, may be  
11 leased for a term of not exceeding fifteen years,  
12 but subject to renewal, at a nominal rental by  
13 such city or town for the purposes of a neighbor-  
14 hood playground; but the care of said enclosed  
15 spaces shall remain with the proprietors of the  
16 surrounding dwellings.

## [E.]

THE RESTORATION OF TREE-GROWTH ON THE  
ISLANDS AND SHORES OF BOSTON HARBOR.

---

[From a report to the Boston Board of Park Commissioners made by Frederick Law Olmsted as landscape architect advisory, Dec. 30, 1887. Reproduced from the Thirteenth Annual Report of the Boston Park Department.]

---

## I.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF BOSTON'S ADVANTAGES AS A SUMMER  
RESORT.

Your Board has heretofore considered some aspects of this subject, and important operations are now in progress as the result of its deliberations, but the communication addressed to it last Arbor Day by the Boston Memorial Association, upon which a report has been asked, has obliged an inquiry to be made of broader scope than has hitherto been thought necessary.

---

Between the wharves of Boston and the sea, outside of Boston Bay, there are seventy-five islands and islets, fifty notable projections of the main-land with bays between them, some of which are the mouths of streams, and a great many shoals and reefs which are exposed, or upon which the sea breaks, at low water. Between all these there are innumerable sub-channels more or less navigable,

according to the stage of the tide and the depth of any object to be floated through them. The rise and fall of the tide varies from eight to sixteen feet, according to the age of the moon and the condition of the weather, and the tidal currents are liable to be strong and complicated. These circumstances not only make the harbor interesting because of what meets the eye of those passing through it or along its shores, but they give fleet, nimbly-turning boats a more marked advantage than they would otherwise have, and make close calculations and tact in trimming and steering them of more obvious importance than they are in harbors with fewer elements of picturesque character. Add to this the further consideration that from the time of the first settlers the people in Boston have been much engaged in fishing ventures, not only on the deep sea, but of a class to be pursued with boats of light burden, and the fact will be accounted for that there has always been an unusual interest among them in the modelling, building, rigging, and seamanship of small craft, both for commercial and for recreative use.

The city government has recognized this interest, and, in an exceptionally systematic way, wisely fostered it by the institution of an annual regatta with prizes to winners from the public purse. Latterly, at the suggestion of your Department, it has begun the building of a promenade pier, providing a fair outlook upon the harbor, and of a large basin especially as a mooring-place for pleasure-boats. With a possible exception in Venice, it is believed that the people of no other city in the world make as much or as good use of their harbor, otherwise than commercially, as those of Boston have been long accustomed to do, and that none take as much or as justifiable pride in the character of their small craft, and their dexterity in handling them.

The success of the "Mayflower," the "Puritan," and the "Volunteer" has called the attention of the world to the special talent thus gradually developed from the circumstances of Boston Harbor. It is, perhaps, more difficult for the people of Boston to realize the full value of their success than for others, taking a more distant view of it, to do so. A few incidents may be recalled to bring certain bearings of it better to mind.

This, for one:—To all appearances there had come, through inaction, to be scarce anything left of the old American regard for seafaring skill and prowess, when, one day last summer, through all the interior of the land, as well as in its seaports, hats everywhere went up with such enthusiasm over the result of a sailing-match of pleasure-boats, that no one could doubt that, in the heart of the nation, little provocation would be needed to stir all its old naval ardor into earnest action.

This, for another:—Certain men, of other parts of the country, send ten thousand dollars to a citizen of Boston as an expression of the gratification they have had in his work, adding, as an explanation, that, in their opinion, "nothing has, of late, redounded more to the credit of the country abroad" than the success of the "Volunteer," because of "the earnest concentration of ingenuity," of which it testifies, that Americans will be found capable whenever sufficient occasion comes to draw it out.

This, for yet another:—That, because of the special talent, bred, as has been shown, of Boston Harbor, which had been manifest in the successive triumphs of the "Mayflower," the "Puritan," and the "Volunteer," the master-workman of those pleasure-boats has been called to be a counsellor of the Secretary of the Navy, in a matter of vital consequence to the country.

And, lastly, this : that out of the recent history of Boston boats, and Boston pleasure-boating, measures of high statesmanship long culpably neglected, are plainly coming to receive a degree of attention that can hardly fail to have great results for the country. The two bills now before Congress looking to a naval volunteer or militia system, being examples of the manner in which this new current of popular disposition appears.

It is necessary to recall such facts as these, that too light a view may not be taken of that method of recreation in which Boston leads the world, and of those conditions of Boston Harbor out of which this leadership has grown.

Relatively to a large consideration of this subject attention is liable to be too much restricted to the more costly class of yachts. In Boston, boating is a thoroughly popular diversion ; interest in it is wide-spread. More than one quarter of all the registered yachts of the entire Atlantic, Pacific, and Lake coasts have their home berths in the waters of the city and its suburbs. The whole number of masted pleasure-craft sailing the harbor is at least seven hundred. A large proportion of these are small and inexpensive boats, and, of the larger, some are owned by clubs of industrious men, individually, of moderate means. Many of the owners live in the interior, coming to Boston and using their boats only during a summer's vacation from business.

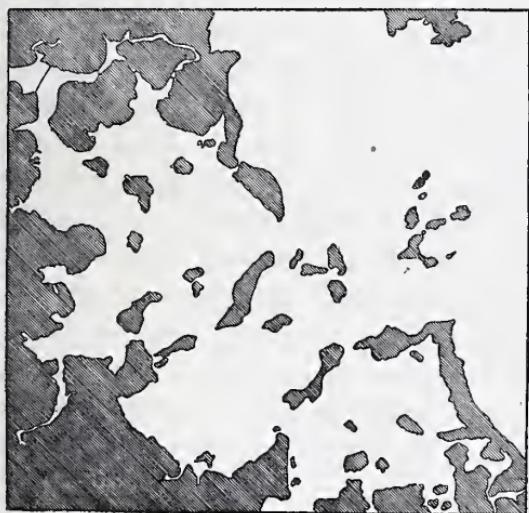
It is to be considered, also, that boating is an amusement much enjoyed by many who take no part in it except as lookers-on ; and, with reference to the amusement the harbor affords to these, it must be remembered that, besides pleasure-boats proper, Boston has a large fleet of light fishing-craft, among which not a few are admirably fashioned and admirably sailed.

Owing to the enjoyment which the harbor offers many excursion trains are now run from a distance for the accommo-

dation of those wishing to visit its shores. A number of large hotels, steamboats, and local railroads have also been built for them. Hundreds of families live, for a few weeks every year, in tents, pitched at points looking upon the harbor, and, of late, numerous light, wooden bungalows have been built in situations first occupied in this way. Many sojourners in these come from a distance.

It will be evident, from these facts, that as, throughout the country, the number of men increases who can choose their dwelling-places independently of immediate money-earning considerations, and of men who are able and inclined to engage in pleasure-boating excursions, and that, as large numbers become interested in aquatic sports and seaboard scenery, the attractiveness of its harbor is to be reckoned no insignificant element of the trade and prosperity of the city. It will then be evident, further, that if its attractiveness, as a summer-resort, can be materially increased by a moderate outlay, it will be profitable to make such outlay.

In what, then, it is to be asked, other than in the play of



its large and lively fleet of fishing and pleasure craft, does the special attractiveness of the harbor consist? The adjoining diagram shows the picturesque disposition of the principal headlands, bays, and islands (outlined, approximately, at half

tide). The special attractiveness of the harbor lies partly in the contrast of the intricate passages and vistas among these, with the unbroken expanse of the ocean upon which it opens, and partly in the varied forms of the bluffs, erags, bars, beaches, and fens that form its shores.<sup>1</sup>

What are the drawbacks to these attractive circumstances?

Chief among them must be recognized the generally hard-featured, bare, bleak, and inhospitable aspect of the headlands and islands. Let any one, passing through the harbor, imagine them clothed with foliage of any kind, and it will be felt how much more agreeable its character would be if they were generally wooded.

Stumps, that still remain upon the most exposed, the rockiest, and bleakest of the islands show that they formerly were wooded. Once cleared, a second growth has been prevented by cropping and pasturing. The land being then much more open than before to frost and drying heat, rains, gales, and salt spray, it has ever since been losing soil and the soil remaining has been losing fertility. Hence the scenery of the harbor has been and is every year being despoiled more and more of its original beauty; its artificial features are becoming more and more disagreeably conspicuous relatively to its natural features, and in these respects it is becoming less and less attractive.

The question whether the waste thus in progress can be arrested, and whether what has been lost can be recovered, is, happily, one to be answered by reference to the result of means used elsewhere for a similar purpose.

The difficulties to be overcome lie chiefly in the bleakness and dryness of much of the land most desirable to be planted; somewhat, also, at certain points, to its exposure

---

<sup>1</sup> A full description of the various natural features of the harbor will be found at p. 96 of the Appendix, compiled from the "Atlantic Coast Pilot."

to salt spray. They are such that trees of the sorts more commonly seen in the lawns, parks, cemeteries, and roadsides of the landward suburbs of the city could not be wisely planted. The suggestion offered by the Memorial Association is that the original forest may be restored. Should this be attempted no results are to be expected that can be brought in comparison with those which are, unfortunately, associated in most minds with the term landscape-gardening. The beauty to be gained through such an operation is not the beauty of clusters, clumps, groups, or any artfully studied combination of trees; much less is it that of trees admirable for their beauty singly. It is the beauty of large compositions as these may be affected, to one looking in any direction across the harbor, by broad masses of foliage palpitating over the rigid structure of the islands and headlands; lifting their skylines; giving them some additional, but not excessive, variety of tint, greater play of light and shade, and completely overcoming the present hardness of outline of their loamy parts, without destroying the ruggedness of their rocky parts.

Having such an end in view, the trees to be planted will be of the same kinds with those formerly growing on the ground. That they may help one another to overcome the difficulties of the situation they will, when planted, be small, pliant and adaptable, offering little for the wind to tussle with; they will be low-branched, and will be set snugly together. A large proportion of all, intimately mingled with the others, will be of species the growth of which, like that of the little white birch of our rural roadsides, is rapid while young but not of long continuance. These, after a few years, will be overtopped and smothered by trees of slower and larger growth, greater constitutional vigor, and more lasting qualities. The former will have served as nurses to the

latter while they are becoming established, and if timely thinning should be neglected, as it is so apt to be, they will gradually disappear by natural process before the permanent stock will be fatally injured by crowding.

Years must pass before the permanent growth can acquire a full-grown forest character, but almost at once the sapling plantations will give a pleasing softness and geniality to those elements of the scenery that are not contributive to its picturesque ruggedness. Three years after the planting is finished the harbor, as a whole, will have acquired a decidedly more good-natured, cheerful, and inviting character.

An impression is common that at most points of the harbor trees cannot be got to grow satisfactorily, and instances are referred to in which they have failed or, at the best, have grown very slowly and with distorted forms. So far as it has been practicable to ascertain, the trees, in these cases, have been ill-chosen and ill-planted, and the result has no bearing upon the proposition favored by the Memorial Association.

Reasons for confidence that, under a course of management judiciously adapted to the special difficulties of the situation, an undertaking of the kind that has been outlined would be successful, are found in experiences of which those of Mr. Joseph Story Fay, at Wood's Holl, supply an example.

The outer part of the sea-beaten promontory of Wood's Holl, had probably been devastated in the same manner as the islands of Boston Harbor. Thirty years ago it was even more bare of trees, bleak and cheerless than they are. As the result of operations which have been carried on within that period by Mr. Fay, about two hundred acres of it is now covered with dense woods of well-grown trees. Mr. Fay, visiting Boston Harbor islands last summer with the Com-

missioners, could see no reason to doubt that by similar operations upon them equally satisfactory results would be secured.

There is a large tract of barren land in a most exposed situation on the west coast of Lake Michigan which, a few years ago, was covered with drifting sand. Because it was supposed to be worthless, and that any attempt to improve it would be regarded as a "Folly," Mr. Robert Douglass chose to take it as a place to demonstrate the practicability of establishing forests under such special difficulties as the situation presented. He has been entirely successful, the sand is fixed and sheltered, leaf mould is beginning to accumulate upon it, and the ground is becoming comparatively moist and productive.

The Kansas City, Fort Scott & Gulf Railroad Company, of which the head-quarters are in this city, held in 1879 a body of bleak and arid land, of alkaline soil, naturally treeless. Some attempts to grow trees upon it had been unsuccessful, and it was generally believed to be incapable of bearing trees. In that year Mr. Douglass offered to take a contract to establish trees upon it, payment to be made him conditionally upon results. He was completely successful, and six hundred acres of the ground are now shaded by a thrifty and valuable wood. On this and other tracts, naturally treeless and supposed to present peculiar difficulties to the growth of trees, there are at this time three million flourishing trees that have been planted, under contracts with different landowners, from five to eleven years ago, by Mr. Douglass.

Mr. Douglass has had more experience in planting under trying circumstances, and has planted more extensively and successfully than any other man on the continent. It being known that he had a few years since critically examined the

plantations of Mr. Fay and others within reach of the sea spray, and that he had some personal knowledge of Boston Harbor, it was thought best to ask his judgment of the scheme under consideration. After preliminary correspondence Mr. Douglass expressed his opinion of it by offering to enter into a contract to carry it out. The terms of his offer will here be stated as an indication of what a man of his experience considers practicable to be accomplished, and at what outlay.

Supposing that the aggregate areas to be planted would not be less than four hundred acres in extent, Mr. Douglass would engage to establish plantations such as have been suggested; to care for them until the trees should be well established, in thrifty condition, and so completely shading the ground that any further cultivation of it would be unnecessary. For this service he would agree to accept, as his compensation, payment at rates, which, with a reasonable allowance for incidental expenses of the Department in connection with and supplementary to the work, would be met by successive appropriations for five years of six thousand dollars a year. Payment of Mr. Douglass' part to be made in instalments as the work satisfactorily advances, the last instalment, amounting to 16% of the whole, to be due only when trees to the number of eight hundred thousand are certified by qualified agents appointed by the Department to have been found well-rooted and thriftily growing upon the ground.

A compact statement is given on the adjoining sheet as to the position, area, ownership, and jurisdiction of thirty-seven islands; of the position and name of thirty-eight detached islets, ledges and beacons, and of the name, position, and some other particulars of fifty headlands, of Boston Bay.

The aggregate area of the islands is a little more than 1,300 acres. Of this the city owns 439 acres; the United States, 241 acres; and, of the remainder, 500 acres have but five owners.

So far as any part of this land has a productive value, it is chiefly because of the pasturage that is found upon it. On but few islands is this considered to be of more than trifling consequence. Where it is of any notable importance, it would, as a rule, be an advantage to have thickets planted along the shore borders of the high land, and clusters of trees at intervals through the pasture-ground, in the shade of which, when grown, cattle would rest.

On the islands owned by the city there are several public institutions, chiefly of a charitable character. Much of the land of these is cultivated, pastured, or occupied by buildings and yards, and, of that which is available for woods, it would be better that much should be planted under the direction and by the forces of the departments in charge of them. It has been ascertained that the heads of these are well inclined to undertake this work, and especially so if supplied by the Park Department with nursery stock for the purpose. On each of them, however, it is believed that there are bodies of land, generally of small extent, which might be planted by the Park Department under an arrangement such as that suggested by Mr. Douglass, while, substantially, the whole of some of the smaller would be available. Conference with the War Department leads to a belief that it would not object to make arrangements with the Commissioners under which considerable portions of the government islands might be planted by the Department. It has been ascertained, also, that private owners of other islands important to be planted are well disposed to coöperate with the city in carrying out the scheme. It is to be hoped that the purpose of the city

would likewise be aided by favorable action of towns bordering upon the harbor beyond the jurisdiction of Boston. A movement in this direction has already been made by the town of Quincy. It is also reasonable to assume that when a demonstration shall have been made of the practicability of growing trees upon the more exposed points, there will be a great deal of planting about the harbor independently of any arrangement with the city, as there is in all its landward suburbs; an increased value of the land being sure to follow.

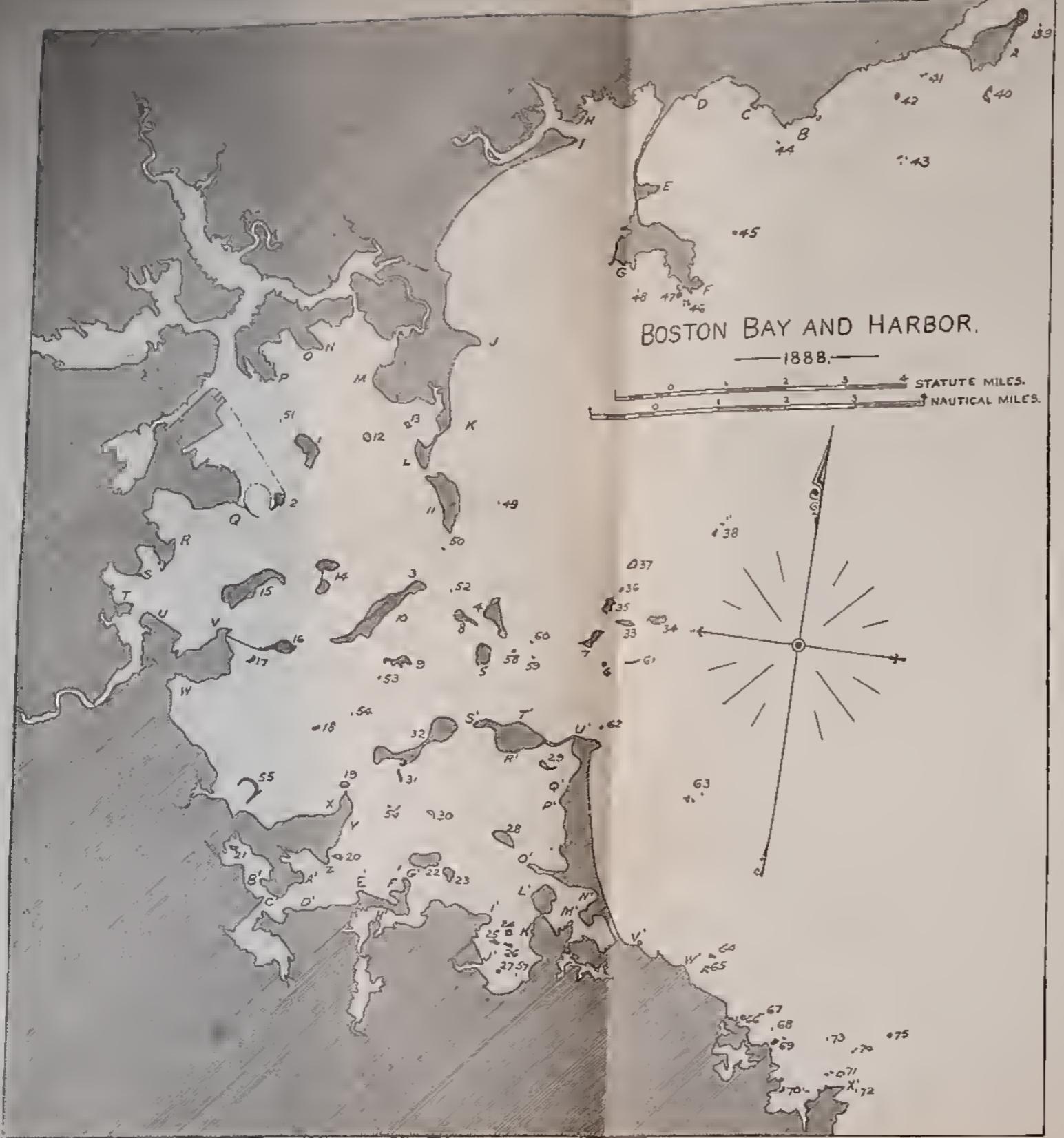
It is believed, as the general result of this review, that if the Park Department should be provided with the amount of \$5,000 a year, for six years, to be used at its discretion for the purpose desired to be accomplished by the Memorial Association, it would, with such coöperation as it would be convenient for other departments of the city government to offer, be able to secure a substantial success. And it is believed that this success would have been gained with large profit to the city.

---

## II.

### THE OUTER PLEASURE CIRCUIT OF BACK BAY.

An important addition to the means before had in view, for the open-air recreation of the people of Boston, has been well advanced during the last year, independently of your Department. It is that commonly called, but by no means described, as the widening of Beacon Street. Its importance lies largely in the circumstance that it will form a short, direct, sylvan pleasure-way between the system of grounds preparing by the Department and the existing spacious but



#### ISLANDS.

No.	Name.	Area.	Ownership.	Jurisdiction.	Remarks.
1	Governor's Island.	72 acres.	United States.	Boston.	Fort Winthrop.
2	Castle	21.6	"	"	Fort Independence.
3	Long Island Head.	33	"	"	Lt.-house and batteries.
4	Lovell's Island.	71.1	"	"	Gov't Buoy Station.
5	George's	39.7	"	"	Fort Warren.
6	Light House	3.6	"	Hull.	Boston Light-house.
7	Great Brewster.	23.1	"	Boston.	Leased to Benj. Dean.
8	Rainsford Island.	17.4	"	"	Almshouse.
9	Gallop's	25.1	"	"	Quarantine Station.
10	Long	182.5	"	"	Almshouse.
11	Deer	182.3	"	"	Houses of Industry and Reformation.
12	Apple	8.9	"	"	"
13	Snake	6.1	"	Winthrop.	Tewksbury and others.
14	Spectacle	61.4	"	Boston.	N. Ward & Co. Rendering Works.
15	Thompson's	146.5	"	Boston Asylum and Farm School for Indigent Boys.	Quincy. Farm School.
16	Moon	40.6	"	Quincy.	Sewerage Reservoir.
17	Little Moon	2.8	"	"	(Nearly dredged out.)
18	Hangman's	1	"	"	Unknown.
19	Nut	5.2	"	H. T. Spear, G'dn.	"
20	Raceoon	4.5	"	W. D. Howard.	"
21	Cat	3	"	Charles Derry.	"
22	Grape	52.7	"	W. L. Bradley.	Weymouth.
23	Slate	13.5	"	S. Jones and others.	Hull.
24	Chandler's	4.5	"	J. R. Brewer.	Hingham.
25	Ragged	3.6	"	Heirs of S. Downer.	"
26	Sailor's	3.9	"	J. R. Brewer.	"
27	Button	1.1	"	A. C. Hersey.	"
28	Bunkin	33.7	"	Harvard College.	Hill.
29	Hog	8.6	"	Sally Jones.	"
30	Sleep	3.2	"	W. James & Sons.	"
31	Prince's Head.	4	"	{ S. Jones and others.	"
32	Peddock's Island.	191.6	"	"	"
33	Middle Brewster.	12.2	"	Augustus Russ.	"
34	Outer Brewster.	17.5	"	Benjamin Dean.	"
35	Calf Island.	17.1	"	{ J. S. Weeks.	"
36	Little Calf Island.	1.1	"	"	"
37	Green Island.	1.8	"	James Young.	Whistling Buoy.
38	The Graves.		(Bare rocky islets.)		Beacon.
39	Marblehead Rock.		"	"	
40	Tinker's Island.		"	"	
41	Little Pig Rocks.		"	"	
42	Ram Island.		"	"	
43	Great Pig Rocks.		"	"	

44	Dread Ledge.	(Dry ledge.)	Spindle.
45	Egg Rock.	(Bold rocky islet.)	Light-house.
46	Shag Rocks.	(Bare rocky islets.)	
47	Pea Island.	" "	
48	Bass Rock.	(Dry ledge.)	
49	Great Fann Bar.	(Dry spit.)	
50	Deer Island Point.	(Dry spit and reef.)	
51	Bird Island.	(Sunken island.)	
52	Nix's Mate.	(Sunken island.)	
53	Quarantine Rocks.	(Bare rocky islets.)	
54	Sunken Island.	(Dry shoal or ledge.)	
55	Half Moon Island.	(Dry sand bar.)	
56	Pig Rocks.	(Dry rocks.)	
57	Beacon Island.	(Rocky islet.)	
58	Brewster Bar.	(Dry spit.)	
59	False Spit.	(Dry ledge.)	
60	Black Rock.	(Bare rock.)	
61	Shag or Egg Rocks.	(Dry ledges.)	
62	Point Allerton Ledge.	" "	
63	The Hardings.	(Bare rocky islets.)	
64	Little Black Rock.	" "	
65	Black Rock.	" "	
66	Sea Ledge.	" "	
67	Black Ledge.	" "	
68	Round Rock.	" "	
69	Brush Island.	" "	
70	White Head.	" "	
71	Gull Island.	" "	
72	Tobias Rock.	" "	
73	West Shag Rock.	" "	
74	East Shag Rocks.	" "	
75	Minot's Ledge.	(Dry ledge.)	Light-house.

#### HEADLANDS.

Those partly occupied by hotels and summer cottages distinguished thus × ; where partly wooded, +.

- A. Marblehead Neck × (The Nanepashemet House — Eastern and Corinthian Yacht Clubs).
- B. Phillips' Point × + (Swampscott — Phillips' Beach).
- C. Fishing Point × (Swampscott — Blaney's Beach).
- D. Red Rock (Lynn — King's Beach).
- E. Little Nahant × + (Lynn and Little Nahant Beaches).
- F. Nahant Head × + (Nahant Harbor — Yacht moorings).
- G. Bayley's Hill and West Cliff × (Nahant).
- H. Tree Point (Lynn Harbor — Lynn and West Lynn Yacht Clubs).
- I. Pines Point × + (Chelsea or Revere Beach — Point of Pines Hotel).
- J. Grover's Cliff × (Winthrop — Southern point of Chelsea Beach).
- K. Winthrop's Head × (Winthrop — Great Head Yacht Club house and moorings).
- L. Point Shirley × (Winthrop — Taft's Hotel).
- M. Chelsea Point × + (Winthrop).
- N. East Wood Island (Wood Island Park — Park Department).
- O. West Wood Island (East Boston).
- P. Jeffries Point (East Boston — Jeffries Yacht Club house and moorings).
- Chelsea (United States Marine Hospital — Chelsea Yacht Club house and moorings).
- Charlestown (United States Navy Yard — Bunker Hill Yacht Club).
- Q. Dorchester or City Point (Marine Park — Park Department; Boston, South Boston, and Bay. View Yacht Club houses and moorings.)
- R. Old Harbor Point (Sewerage Pumping Station — Bay State Gas works).
- S. Savin Hill and Fox Point × + (Savin Hill Yacht Club house and moorings).
- T. Commercial Point (Boston Gas Works — Dorchester Yacht Club house and moorings).
- U. Squantum Meadows × + (Squantum Beach — Entrance to Neponset River).
- V. Squantum Head × + (Squaw Rock Profile).
- W. Moswetusset Hill + (Quincy Bay).
- X. Quincy Great Hill (Quincy and Hingham bays).
- Y. Hough's Neck × (Mear's Beach).
- Z. Rock Island Head (Weymouth Fore River).
- A<sup>1</sup>. Gull Point (Germantown East Point).
- B<sup>1</sup>. Phillips' Head (Germantown West Point).
- C<sup>1</sup>. Bent Point (Quincy — Quincy Yacht Club moorings).
- D<sup>1</sup>. Lovell's Grove + and Weymouth Great Hill (N. Weymouth).
- E<sup>1</sup>. Eastern Neck (Weymouth Fore and Back rivers).
- F<sup>1</sup>. Upper Neck .. .. .. ..
- G<sup>1</sup>. Lower Neck .. .. .. ..
- H<sup>1</sup>. Stodder's Neck (Weymouth Back River).
- I<sup>1</sup>. Crow Point × (Downer's Landing — Hingham Harbor).
- J<sup>1</sup>. Otis' Hill (Hingham Harbor).
- K<sup>1</sup>. Planter's Hill (Hingham Harbor).
- L<sup>1</sup>. World's End (South side of entrance to Weir River).
- M<sup>1</sup>. Hampton Hill (Weir River).
- N<sup>1</sup>. Sagamore Head × (Nantasket Beach — Hotel Nantasket).
- O<sup>1</sup>. White Head × (Weir River and Nantasket Beach).
- P<sup>1</sup>. Strawberry Hill × (Nantasket Beach).
- Q<sup>1</sup>. Skull Head × (Hingham Bay).
- R<sup>1</sup>. Hull × (Hull Yacht Club house and moorings).
- S<sup>1</sup>. Windmill Point × (Pemberton Hotel).
- T<sup>1</sup>. Nantasket Hills (Signal Station).
- U<sup>1</sup>. Point Allerton × (Northern Point of Nantasket Beach).
- V<sup>1</sup>. Rockland Hills × (Atlantic and Rockland Houses).
- W<sup>1</sup>. Green Hill × (Black Rock House).
- X<sup>1</sup>. Strawberry Point × (Glades House).



## [ F.]

## A "MASSACHUSETTS FOREST."

[From "Garden and Forest," August, 1891.]

It is remarkable how little the populations of our great cities often know of prominent and important features of the landscape close at hand. A notable instance of this is to be found in the beautiful range of the Blue Hills, near Boston. These hills are the highest elevations in eastern Massachusetts, and are the only eminences of a distinctively mountainous character near the Atlantic coast line of the United States south of Mount Agamenticus, near Kittery, in Maine. The highest summit is known as the "Big Blue," and is the westernmost of the range, where stands the stone tower of the Rotch Meteorological Observatory, a privately endowed institution which is performing a valuable scientific service. This summit is six hundred and thirty-five feet above the sea level, but, being so near the ocean, that altitude shows for its full value, giving an appearance of height greater than that often possessed by inland elevations very much superior.

The Blue Hills are the most prominent landscape feature of the coast of Massachusetts Bay and of the "Boston Basin," as it is called, of which they form the southern wall. Their noble undulating lines, presenting a succession of gracefully sweeping curves, like inverted crescents, form charming backgrounds of the views to the southward from Franklin Park and the Arnold Arboretum. From the former, the range, lifting itself without foreshortening on the thither side of the Neponset valley, and thereby gaining in dignity and apparent elevation, appears to be included in the park, which, in the noble vista from the southern end of the Playstead Overlook down the great central meadow of the Country Park, seems to stretch away to the very base of the hills. This lovely pastoral landscape has a beautiful complement near by. From the outlook point of the recently completed Loop road of the Wilderness in the park, the Blue Hills form the background of a perfect sylvan picture, making the focal element of the composition, as it may well be called, of one of Mr. Olmsted's most exquisite creations. Whoever has seen this enchanting view,—standing at the edge of a parapet at the head of a rocky ravine in the steep hillside, with a glimpse of the main drive of the park smoothly

gleaming as it curves and loses itself in the trees just below with a sort of river-like effect (very much, it may be presumed, like those simulations of water made with surfaces of sand in the gardens of the Japanese), and overlooking an unbroken billowy expanse of woodland, varied with the shadings and forms of commingling deciduous and coniferous trees, the stately hills closing in the vista,—whoever has seen this will not be likely to forget it. It is one of those rare landscape passages which, like that sight of the Wartburg framed in the foliage of the Thuringian forest from a hillside near Eisenach, is treasured most preciously in the memory, and is destined to become equally famous.

The Blue Hills are thus familiar to thousands at a distance, and very many who have gazed in delighted admiration have been filled with the curious longing that generally arises at such times, to know them close at hand and gaze from their summits over the widespread landscape that must thence be disclosed. But of those thousands very few have ever visited the spot, although the hills are, indeed, a favorite excursion ground for many nature lovers,—like the members of the Appalachian Club, for instance. It would be thought, however, that a range of hills like this, close to a great city, would long since have become popular and celebrated as a pleasure resort, as they certainly would in the neighborhood of a European metropolis.

The views from those summits are remarkably far-reaching and varied. They embrace a great extent of coast and inland scenery: the blue sea indenting the shores, meandering rivers, wide meadows and plains, clustering towns, forest expanses, hilly undulations, and the lofty peaks of far-away mountains,—Monadnock and Wachusett,—with other ranges more distant. To the northward lies the great city, spreading until its mass of buildings is lost beyond the hills which they cover. Its noise is hushed, its bustle not apparent save in the smoky streamers that float like dusky pennants in the air. One feels no sense of the swarming multitudes, with their manifold occupations, burdens and cares, concentrated in that space which, though so limited in comparison with the vast encircling horizon, holds a third of the population of the next to the most densely populated State in the Union. To the southward, however, the contrast to the city is impressive. Save for a peeping spire, or a distant town that seems but a wee cluster of houses, seen at intervals, the earth's surface appears as a vast wilderness, almost as unbroken as it must have looked when the eye of a white man first gazed from these hill-tops. Close at hand, on the sontherly side, just at the foot of the Big Blue, nestles the beautiful placid sheet called Ponkapog Pond. Near by

Mr. T. B. Aldrich, the poet, has his summer home, amid surroundings where it seems hardly possible that it could be only twelve miles removed from the turmoil of a great city.

In all this varied landscape human occupancy seems but a passing incident, much as it has done to change the face of nature. The abiding impression is that of nature herself, and humanity seems to be but one of her forces, temporarily modifying the earth's surface, like the beavers, the ants or the earth-worms. And how the trees serve to veil the structures of man! I have been struck by this even on the verge of London, where trees seemed the main feature, with brick walls and roofs but peering between them. After all, it would take but a few years of absence on the part of man for all this expanse to relapse into utter wildness, wiping out all signs of our handiwork, just as the sponge effaces the chalk-marks from a black-board.

The air on these hill-tops is like that of the mountains, pure and bracing, for the winds sweep freely from all sides. Here would be an ideal place for a great sanitarium; for, close at hand, people of limited means, who cannot afford long journeys, would find all the attractions of air and scenery for which many are accustomed to travel hundreds of miles.

The most convenient way to reach the Blue Hills is to take the cars of either the Providence division of the Old Colony, or the New York & New England, to Readville station in the town of Hyde Park. The two stations are within a few hundred feet of each other. From here it is an easy walk of something over two miles to the place where the Canton turnpike crosses the westerly shoulder of the Big Blue. There are also carriages always to be had at the railway stations at reasonable rates. The way to the hills is over pleasant roads. It is only a short distance to the Neponset River, which is crossed by a picturesque stone-arched bridge. Passing the river, we come to the town of Milton, one of the wealthiest and most beautiful in the neighborhood of Boston. It is filled with fine country seats. The land is mostly in large holdings, the cutting up into small lots and the encouragement of a numerous population having been discouraged by the residents. The consequent effect is to give the town a peculiarly English, park-like character.

The Blue Hill range is chiefly in Milton, though a large portion lies in Canton, the next town to the southward, and in the city of Quincy to the eastward. It is not generally known that it is to these hills that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts owes its name. The country about the bay was called by the Indians living here-about, "Massachusetts," a word which in the Algonquin tongue

literally means the “Great Hills Place.” Thus it was that Massachusetts Bay received its name ; thence the colony and the province of Massachusetts Bay, and finally the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It seems appropriate that the last remnant of the Indians in this part of the world, the Ponkapog tribe, lived on the southerly verge of these hills at the place that still bears their name, and where possibly some of their descendants may yet be found absorbed in the rural population of the neighborhood.

Even merely for the sake of commemorating the origin of the name of the great State from which has arisen the glorious fabric of our mighty republic with its free institutions, — aside from the remarkable beauty and picturesqe character of the region, — it would seem to be extremely desirable that this noble range, which thus gave Massachusetts its name, should in some way be forever dedicated to public uses. The best way to accomplish this end would seem to be for the State to take the entire region occupied by the hills, which is still for the greater part in a wild, woodland state, and make a permanent forest reservation of it. “The Massachusetts Forest” would be an exceedingly appropriate name for the place.

It would require a special legislative act for the purpose. Action under the public forest law — under which, by the way, nothing has ever yet been done — would be hardly practicable, as it would be difficult to get the three communities in which the range lies to unite to this end. If the matter were properly brought before the legislature, the patriotic purpose underlying the proposition, which should appeal to every true son of Massachusetts, ought to be sufficient to secure favorable action, to say nothing of the great benefit which would be conferred upon the entire State by the creation of so beautiful and valuable a public domain. Within sight of these hill-tops there lies more than half the population and more than half of the property value of this thickly peopled and rich Commonwealth. The establishment of such a public forest would greatly advance the happiness and health of this population, and would thereby, in increasing the attractiveness of the region, correspondingly enhance its prosperity.

A special act, taking this region for the purpose, and providing the means for its administration and improvement, would therefore be necessary. It would probably be a good idea to place the domain in charge of the newly created society called “The Trustees of Public Reservations.” The task could be intrusted to no more willing and capable hands.

The cost would not be great. The land is rough and of comparatively little value. Much of it would probably be given by

the owners for such a purpose, as was the case with the Lynn Woods. The rest could be obtained at low figures, either by ordinary purchase or under the right of eminent domain.

The improvement of a tract of such a nature would be comparatively inexpensive also. The most that would be needed would be to protect it from fires and other devastations, and to secure a forest growth where desirable. Then a system of good roads, winding along the slopes, with vistas opening out through the trees here and there, and with branches to the summits, should be created. This system, connecting with the nearest railway points, would render the range easily accessible to the great population of the city and of the entire surrounding region. It would form one of the most beautiful drives, and a service of popular conveyances could be arranged for at cheap rates, that would take passengers from one end of the range to the other, going by one railway route and returning by another. A round-trip ticket, covering the entire excursion, would bring it within the means of the multitude.

Favorable sites for hotels, sanitariums, restaurants, etc., could be leased to the right parties, under proper conditions, and possibly these might be approached by lines of electric railway connecting with the suburban services of the steam lines. With such conveniences these institutions could not fail to be liberally patronized, with a long season, lasting from spring-time well into the autumn.

By all means, then, let us have our "Massachusetts Forest." To that end I would suggest that persons naturally interested in bringing it about — such as the members of the Trustees of Public Reservations, or of the Appalachian Club — take the matter definitely in hand, inform themselves as thoroughly as possible on the subject, including the character and conditions of the region, and unite in bringing it to the attention of the next General Court of Massachusetts.

SYLVESTER BAXTER.







1893

1915-1902)

1914

T. L. : 12. 00/5

8232

12/24

H.

GETTY CENTER LIBRARY



3 3125 00629 9354

